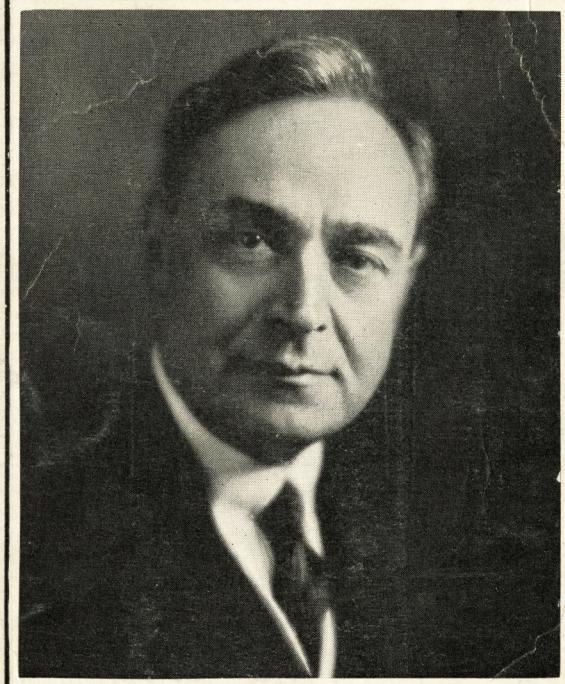


MUSIC LOVERS' PHONOGRAPH

MONTHLY REVIEW



*An Independent American Magazine for Amateurs
Interested In Recorded Music and Its Development*

VOL. III

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No. 4

Edited by

AXEL B. JOHNSON

ODEON

ELECTRIC

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DR. WEISSMANN

and The Grand Symphony Orchestra, Berlin

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NEW YORK CITY

MUSIC LOVERS'

PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW

AXEL B. JOHNSON, *Managing Editor*

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General Review

FIRST of the month's many noteworthy releases come the Victor Company's sensational recordings of the Boston Symphony Orchestra under direction of Serge Koussevitzky. It will be impossible to describe the excellence of these wonderful records; they must be heard to be appreciated. I can assure my readers that they are the Boston Symphony exactly as you hear it in concert.

The Hollywood Bowl Program is another excellent Victor release. Our hats are off to both the conductor and the recording director, for it must be remembered that these disks were made in the open air, "under the stars" as they term it, and yet the acoustics are remarkable fine. The performance of all five selections are most adequate. I have not heard as yet any of the records in the Tristan and Isolde album, but R. D. D.'s review will be found among the operatic reviews. The other orchestral works are a brilliant Carmen Suite by Stokowski, a new record of the Detroit orchestra heard in three little Russian pieces (Tchaikowsky's Valse-Serenade and Marche Miniature and Altschuler's Russian Soldier's Song,) and Paul Whiteman's brilliant recording of Ferdy Grofé's suite, Three Shades of Blue. In the special Educational list No. 5, to be discussed in a later issue, are two orchestral works: The Moldau played by Bourdon in his usual fine style, despite the handicaps of a rather limited orchestra, and the Coates version of Till Eulenspiegel, to be reviewed later.

Also on the Victor list are two splendid instrumental disks by Mischa Elman and Vladimir Horowitz, the latter in his second release, and noteworthy vocal records by Rosa Ponselle, Beniamino Gigli, Galli-Curci, and Louise Homer and Giovanni Martinelli in duet. Special praise goes to the Gigli record. I should not forget to mention the funniest record since Columbia's Two Black Crows, Twisting the Dials, a take-off on the radio by the Happiness Boys. This is one of the few comic records which is consistently funny all the way through.

Leading the Columbia list is Bodanzky's three-part recording of Die Meistersinger Prelude. We had heard much favorable comment on this work from Europe, but it far surpassed our expectations. As is mentioned in R. D. D.'s review, the work was recorded by our own American recording director, Mr. Charles L. Hibbard of the Okeh Corporation who toured Europe last summer visiting the recording laboratories of the various affiliated Columbia and Parlophone companies, and who supervised the recording of these disks in Berlin during his stay there. I happened to be in New York on the day that Mr. Hibbard returned and going to the laboratory with some of his other friends to welcome him home, we heard him tell with the greatest enthusiasm about the making of these records, of the immense size of the orchestra (the largest he had ever recorded), of his great admiration for Bodanzky as conductor, and of his pride at being chosen by his

German colleagues to supervise the recording. To tell the truth, we were joshing him a little, thinking that he was over-enthusiastic, especially in describing the size of the orchestra. But on my return home, I had the pleasure of a visit from Mr. Georg Boettcher, famous French horn player, who was induced by Mr. Koussevitzky to leave the Berlin State Opera House Orchestra to take the post of principal of the noted horn choir of the Boston Symphony. And the first thing Mr. Boettcher asked was if I had the samples of Bodanzky's *Meistersinger* Prelude in the Studio. I wondered why he should ask for this particular work, as for over eighteen years he had been recording almost every day with the Berlin State Opera House Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Charlottenburg Opera House Orchestra, etc., under the direction of all the leading German conductors, Blech, Muck, Mörike, Weissmann, Fried, Kleiber, Abendroth, Klemperer, Strauss, Furtwängler, Pfitzner, etc., etc. He explained that the Bodanzky records were made just two days before he left for America, and that, by the way, they were supervised by an American visiting the laboratory, a man who most certainly knew his business. "I have never played under a man who combined such technical knowledge and musical insight, and I am anxious to hear and own the finished records, for they are unquestionably exceptional."

Yes, indeed, they are: even the celebrated version by Dr. Muck is eclipsed by them. By all means you should hear them, and regardless of what set you may already possess, you will want this one also.

Next on the Columbia list are Masterworks sets 99 and 100, respectively the Liszt A major Piano Concerto recently released under the Odeon label, and the Debussy Quartet played by the Lener String Quartet, both examples of fine performance matched by fine recording. Gaubert and the Paris Conservatory Orchestra are heard in Saint-Saëns' *Rouet d'Omphale* which we imported recently in the French pressing; Eva Turner, a sensational British soprano, makes her American debut in a wonderful series of three impressive operatic disks; George Gershwin plays piano solo versions of his own preludes; Myra Hess, Felix Salmond, Sophie Braslau, and Charles Hackett are also represented with characteristic releases.

(I might mention here that the other day while visiting the local branch of the Columbia Company, Mr. Norman Smith, the New England Manager, kindly demonstrated for me the new Columbia-Kolster Viva-Tonal combination phonograph, Model 980. A complete description of this most remarkable instrument will appear in the next issue.)

Leading the Brunswick releases for the month are Albums 13 and 14 in their celebrity series, two sets of excerpts from all the most popular Gilbert and Sullivan operas, spiritedly performed by a good orchestra and cast; unfortunately, the singers are not named. The leading orchestral disk is Sokoloff's coupling of Sibelius' *Valse Triste* and Halvorsen's *Entrance of the Boyars*, a record

which caused quite an argument in the studio. R. D. D., as his review shows, was most enthusiastic, and several other members of the staff agreed with him, but having heard both compositions conducted by their respective composers scores of times, I could not agree that Sokoloff's interpretations were absolutely authentic. I will admit that his are the best on records up to date (with the exception of Mengelberg's old acoustical version of the *Entrance of the Boyars*), but we are still waiting for fully satisfactory recorded performances of both pieces.

Among the solo disks, those by Chamlee, Hilsberg, Onegin, Morrisey, Branzell, and Fradkin all deserve warm praise.

From Odeon we have brilliant records of the *Martha* Overture and Tales of Hoffman excerpts, played by Dr. Weissmann, and a less satisfactory record of Brahms' Fifth and Sixth Hungarian Dances and Tenth Slavonic Dance. The Polyphonic Choir has fine choral record of *Ave Verum Corpus* and *Tu Es Petrus* from the Mass of the 29th Eucharistic Congress; the New Master Orchestra couples vigorous *Tosca* and *Bohème* fantasias; and Edith Lorand and Dajos Bela are represented as effectively as always. The former's record of *Gems* from the favorite operettas of Johann Strauss, von Suppe, and Millöcker, is to be particularly recommended.

This month's foreign supplements are not quite as rich in "finds" as has been usual during the last few months. However, there are some very good works, notably in the Odeon list. I should like to call special attention to Odeon 85195 and 85192. The former has a brilliant performance of the *Hoch und Deutschmeister* March by the Grosses Odeon Streichorchester—a fine example of military march playing by a full orchestra. The latter contains *Stille Nacht*, *Heilige Nacht*, and *O du Fröhlicher*, sung by the Staats und Domchor under the direction of Prof. Hugo Rüdel. The other evening I played this record to a German gentleman who formerly sang in the Staats und Domchor in Berlin, and he described how Rüdel and his famous chorus sang *Stille Nacht* every year at a special Christmas morning service in the Berlin Cathedral. The church would be filled hours before the service began, and the experience of being present was one that never could be forgotten. He termed the record "absolutely perfect."

The outstanding records in the Columbia foreign list are the two released in the domestic supplement as novelty disks, and the organ record by Quentin Maclean of the *Light Calvary Overture*, released in the Scotch list. For Brunswick, the leaders are the two orchestral works by the Brunswick International Concert Orchestra. For Victor, the record by the Russian State Choir of *Storm on the Volga*, and the light orchestral disks by Marek Webér, Ferdy Kauffmann, Gerhard Hoffman, and their respective orchestras. It is also worth nothing that this month the Victor Company has begun a mid-monthly foreign supplement and to adopt a new system of numbering foreign releases.

We have received large boxes of imported re-

cords from both the H. Royer Smith Company of Philadelphia and The Gramophone Shop of New York City. A shipment from the New York Band Instrument Company is on its way to us as this is being written. From the Royer Smith Company we received Polydor records of Beethoven's Missa Solemnis and Fourth Symphony, Brahms' String Quartet, Op. 51 and Mozart's Quartet No. 21 in D major (played by the Buxbaum Quartet) and a large number of Polydor and French Columbia instrumental and vocal solo disks. From The Gramophone Shop we received Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony conducted by Franz Schalk, Harty's Rosamunde album, the Maid of the Mill cycle sung by Hans Duhau, L'Arlesienne Suite conducted by Chagnon, a second Pelleas et Mélisande album, and many French Columbia and French Odeon instrumental and vocal solo disks. Some of these imported works are reviewed in this issue and some of the others will be reviewed later.

One of the features of the year's releases is always the Victor special New Year's list, which will appear this year on January 11th. This remarkable list of long-awaited re-pressings from the affiliated Victor companies is printed in full following the foreign reviews in this issue.

The current British lists are unusually rich in significant and novel works. The English Columbia Company leads with many arresting releases: a complete Tristan and Isolde in three volumes, nineteen records, recorded at the Bayreuth Festival last summer, Karl Elmendorf, conductor; Tchaikowsky's Fifth Symphony played by Mengelberg and his Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra; Strawinski's Petrouchka Suite conducted by the composer (his first appearance on records); six Chopin Nocturnes played by Leopold Godowsky with an introductory lecture disk by Ernest Newman; a ten-record album of Cavalleria Rusticana sung in English by principals and orchestra of the British National Opera Company, conducted by Aylmer Buesst; Liszt's First Hungarian Rhapsody played by Ernst Donnanyi and the Budapest Philharmonic; Glazounow's Stenka Razine played by Dufauw and the Brussels Royal Conservatory Orchestra; a Midsummer Night's Dream album with the Overture played by Sir Henry Wood and the Scherzo by Mengelberg; the William Tell Overture played by Sir Henry Wood; and a two-part Carmen Entr'acte played by the Garde Républicaine Band. Other instrumental works are a violin record by Szigeti of Milhaud's Tijuca (from the Saudades do Brazil), a viola record by Tertis of Beethoven's Variations, Op. 66, and Erik Coates' Three Bears Suite, conducted by the composer. There are vocal disks by Licette and Noble (Mozart arias in English), Borgioli and Vanelli (arias from *La Bohème*), Lomanto (Rigoletto arias), Dame Clara Butt (Were You There? and The Fold), and Stabile (Figaro arias.) Damrosch's Mother Goose Suite and Truc's recording of the Carnival of the Animals are given British release for the first time.

The H. M. V. list has several American works, notably Stokowski's set of Brahms' First Sym-

phony and the Flonzaley-Gabrilowitsch Schumann Quintet. But there are many new works: Beethoven's Eight, played by Schalk and the Vienna Philharmonic; three Spanish Dances of Granados and Albeniz' Triana, played by Goossens and the New Light Symphony Orchestra; the marches from Tannhäuser and Berlioz' Faust by Dr. Blech; an extract from the third suite from Rimsky-Korsakow's Tsar Saltan, by Albert Coates and the London Symphony; Moussorgsky's Gopak and the Pizzicato from Sylvia, played by Mark Hambourg (piano); and Saint-Saëns' Prelude in E flat and the Swan, played by Dupré (organ). Vocal disks: Leonora's aria from Fidelio, sung by Frida Leider; Maria Olczewska in Gluck and Handel arias; and in a special release, three records from Boris with Chaliapin in the title role, recorded at the actual performance in Covent Garden; there are other special records from Faust (Hislop), Turandot, Boris, and Pagliacci, with the Royal Opera Chorus.

Four orchestral records head the Parlophone list: Brünnhilde's Tod conducted by Schillings; Sibelius' Valse Triste and Finlandia conducted by Järnefelt; the overture to Die Fledermaus conducted by Bodanzky; and the Prelude, Cortège, and Air de danse from Debussy's L'Enfant Prodigue, conducted by Cloëz. Karol Sreter plays piano versions of Vienna Blood and the Fledermaus and Artist's Life waltzes; Edith Lorand re-records her version of Granados' Spanish Dance and de Falla's Jota; Lotte Lehmann sings Schumann's Der Nussbaum and Auftrage; David Devries sings arias from La Dame Blanche and Faust; Inghilleri sings the Prologue to Pagliacci and Largo al Factotum from the Barber of Seville; Nino Ederle sings two Mignon arias; and Seinemeyer, Pillinsky Burg, and Jung join forces in the finale to Act I of Lohengrin.

The only Brunswick release of special interest is Alexander Brailowsky's disk of the Scarlatti-Taussig Pastorale and Capriccio, and Weber's Perpetum Mobile.

In France, besides the works mentioned above as received from our importers, there are also new issues of the Moldau, conducted by Kleiber for Polydor; a four-part recording of the long-awaited De Falla Nights in the Gardens of Spain, for French H. M. V., conductor not specified; Beethoven's First Symphony conducted by Dr. Fitzner; Haydn's Quartets No. 49 and Op. 74, No. 3, played by the Buxbaum Quartet for Polydor; Saint-Saëns's Septet (French Odeon); Liszt's E flat and Chopin's E piano concertos and a number of solo records by Alexander Brailowsky (Polydor).

Our readers will notice the change in position of the foreign and domestic release notes; the American releases from now on will be discussed at the beginning of this General Review. Formerly the foreign issues were unquestionably the most important. However, during the last two and a half years the American companies have made great strides and produced such significant works that the tables are now turned, and (as a well-known enthusiast has written us), the

domestic releases are the most interesting and important today.

The controversies which have raged over Columbia's Schubert Contest ever since its inception did not abate with the completion of the contest and the award of the ten thousand dollar international prize to Kurt Atterberg's Sixth Symphony. So many confusing and contradictory reports have appeared lately in the press regarding the sincerity of the composer's motives in writing his prize-winning work that I take pleasure in printing below the final word on the subject. Mr. Cox's statement surely settles the question for good and all, and satisfactorily spikes the ridiculous rumors that have been put into circulation.

As indicated by the review in last month's issue, the opinion of the entire Staff of THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW on the Atterberg symphony is that it is a lively and stimulating composition, not a great work of art, but one that is certainly not lacking in either life or interest. In its recorded form it has the added merit of a brilliantly virtuosic performance and recording. I might add that every member of the Staff has purchased the set for his personal library.

A final note of interest is that Ossip Gabrilowitsch, whose fulminations against the original intention of the contest to complete the Unfinished Symphony played a large part in bringing about revision of the terms of the contest, has signified his intention of performing the Atterberg work at one of his concerts in Philadelphia as guest conductor with the Philadelphia Symphony.

I have received a large number of enquiries and letters on this subject, and I feel that this note and the following statement satisfactorily settle the question for every unprejudiced music lover.

STATEMENT

In behalf of the Columbia Phonograph Company, sponsor of the Schubert Centennial and donor of \$20,000.00 in prizes for original symphonic works in homage to Schubert, and in behalf of its co-workers in the Centennial, I wish to denounce the false report that the disc recordings and the publishers' plates of the Grand Prize symphony by Atterberg will be discarded.

Atterberg, by his cable of explanation, has fully satisfied us that the original interview, in which he was alleged to have been the perpetrator of a hoax, was a yarn.

The judges and all who have seen the score agree there are no plagiarisms.

Atterberg's quotation of a Schubert theme is entirely valid, since the contest terms authorized contestants to use Schubert melodies for quotation or variation.

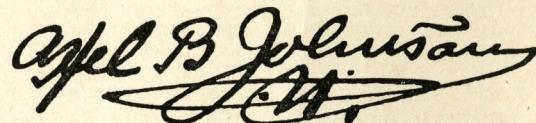
Therefore, we regard the incident as closed, except for such academic discussion as scholars wish to give it.

The sale of both records and musical scores of the Atterberg Symphony has increased in America as well as in Europe.

(Signed) H. C. Cox, President
Columbia Phonograph Co.

December 3, 1928.

Anyone who has the privilege of knowing Mr. Cox personally will agree that he would never issue a statement like the above unless he was honestly convinced that the facts fully warranted it.



The Boston Symphony Orchestra

(Exclusive Victor Artists)

NOTE: The following article on the history and recordings of the Boston Symphony Orchestra consists largely of material which first appeared in the second issue of THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW, November, 1926. In the time between its first appearance and this republication the circulation of the magazine has multiplied many times, and while the majority of our original subscribers are still among our most faithful friends and supporters, we are confident that they will not begrudge the space to make this article known to the many new readers of the magazine. The issue of new recordings by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Mr. Koussevitzky is surely sufficient excuse for the re-publication of the article. In the present form the portions of the article dealing with the recordings and the present and future of the orchestra have necessarily been re-cast and augmented. Again acknowledgements should be made to the management of the orchestra, who both then and now have been most generous in their interest and assistance, and to Mr. M. A. DeWolfe Howe's excellent historical sketch of the orchestra (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914).

THE words, "Boston Symphony Orchestra" signify much more than the name of one of the illustrious musical organizations, much more than the name of a deeply rooted civic and national institution. They are also a symbol, a symbol

of the tangible flowering of the dreams and desires of countless men and women. A concert is not merely a public performance, it is a fusion of the spirit of the composer with that of the conductor, of the conductor with those of the men of the orchestra, and of all with those of the audience,—each individual a microcosm, a world in itself, broadened and enriched by the contact with new and more beautiful worlds; sensitized and inspired by the glimpse of new and more distant horizons.

So it is that a brief outline of the history and development of the Boston Symphony Orchestra must be something more than a bald recital of names and dates. It must be more than the smug boasting of the local citizen. For every name named, for every service commended, there are hundreds more that cannot be named or commended, unknown perhaps to anyone. A work like the establishment and growth of a great orchestra is not the work of a few individuals alone; the active participants are but the agents and spokesmen of the many who are unable to act or to speak, but whose inarticulate needs and hopes are the soil from which everything must spring.

The late Henry Lee Higginson was the founder and guardian angel of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; without his untiring efforts and unceasing support it never could have been a possibility. But Mr. Higginson was not working for

himself or the orchestra alone; he was working for an ideal, an ideal shared by many, but which he alone was able to bring to fruition. To his name must be added those of the other generous and great-spirited men and women who came forward and who are coming forward richly to provide the means to carry on the work. There must be added the names of the conductors and the players who have given much more than their merely technical services, a spirit and artistic understanding that make music a flowering of the emotion and not the skeleton of a science. The conductor and soloists enjoy some measure of public appreciation, but the men of the orchestra, often forgotten in the rush to shower praise on the more prominent figures, deserve much more of the credit than is commonly accorded them. There must be added again the names of those who so efficiently and wisely direct the management of the organization, planning out the ways by which it can be kept on a sound footing and be utilized to the greatest good. Finally are the countless numbers who hear the orchestra, some perhaps for a single time, but who are enabled to grow by that experience. Nor are they merely passive and receptive: listeners are as necessary to music as the performers themselves; each audience gets much from the orchestra, but the orchestra receives in turn something from the audience, given in the moment of emotional and spiritual contact.

First credit, then, must be given to the active founders and supporters, led so splendidly by Mr. Higginson. But the myriad others should not be forgotten, and never were forgotten by Mr. Higginson who saw clearly the broad base on which the orchestra must be established in order to live, and in order to become that projection of the hopes and dreams of thousands of inarticulate, music hungry people for whom he worked.

THE FOUNDATION

During the nineteenth century, music in Boston gradually developed and began to grow out of the narrow bonds of psalmody which up to that time had encased it. At first, choral music predominated and the earliest important musical organization, the famous Handel and Haydn Society, formed in 1815, was choral in nature. Musical magazines sprang up and the transcendentalists led the way in turning the attention of the people to the art of music, one sorely needed by the inhibition-bound Puritan of New England. In 1833 the Boston Academy of Music was established, later giving orchestral concerts. The Musical Fund Society took its place in 1847, while from 1849 to 1854 The Germania Orchestra gave visiting concerts, exerting a considerable romantic and exotic influence on the previously somewhat prosaic status of music in Boston. It is curious to read in a reminiscence of William F. Apthorp about a "Railway Gallop" which was played by this organization, "during the playing of which a little mock steam-engine kept scooting about (by clock work?) on the floor of the hall, with black cotton wool smoke coming out of the funnel." Evidently Honegger's *Pacific 231*, introduced by Mr. Koussevitzky at his first concert, 1924, had a precursor!

But despite the crudities of the public taste of those times—natural enough, of course, under the circumstances—the programs were already beginning to experience that change for the better which is so apparent today. To compare the programs of an organization of as much importance as that of Theodore Thomas with those of the present is extremely enlightening to those who profess to believe that no advance has been made in musical taste. Gradually more and more serious and symphonic works crept into the repertoires to the exclusion of the lighter pieces. The early history of every orchestra contains many plaints and protestations against the conductors who make these changes, but the progress goes inevitably on.

The famous Boston Music Hall was built in 1852, partly through the efforts of the Harvard Musical Association, led by John S. Dwight (another tremendous influence for good in the musical history of Boston). For half a century the old Music Hall was the center of the musical life of Boston; there, of course, were given the concerts furnished by the Philharmonic Society under Carl Zerrahn which were replaced after the Civil War by the concerts of the Harvard Musical Association under the same conductor, which continued until the establishment of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1881.

The latter organization has so far outshone the early orchestras and societies that they have been nearly forgotten in many cases. But the work that they did in preparing the soil was of inestimable value. The musical tastes of the people had to be educated by degrees up to symphonic standards. As it was, the early days of the Boston Symphony were filled with multitudinous bewailments of the "heaviness" and dryness of the programs. "As dull as a symphony concert" was a fair simile to many people of those days. Then, of course, there were the usual jibes at the concerts as being social functions endured in silence by the aspiring. Such an attitude would probably have been shared by more people had not the earlier concerts and the work of the choral societies proved to many New Englanders that music was not merely a cerebral or social exercise, nor yet the work of the devil, but a legitimate art and emotional pleasure and necessity. In a pioneer country the proper attitude toward the arts is difficult to build up; it is a task of patience and infinite wisdom to bring a people whose artistic appetites have been so long denied to the state when they can begin to drink in and appreciate the great flow of health-giving and life-bringing music.

How appropriate, and yet how remarkable, that it should have been a native New Englander who was to bring about the great change, who recognized the need so clearly that he would establish an orchestra and support it out of his own pocket. Patrons of the arts were at that time practically unknown in America; such "harmless insanity" was looked upon as the recreation exclusively of European princes. Through the example largely of Mr. Higginson and a few other far-sighted pioneers, many men and women who possess the means for doing untold good for their community and nation have learned that the greatest benefit they can possibly confer is to encourage and support true artistic endeavors, for which active help is so strongly needed. So many have learned this and so much has been done of recent years to further the arts in this country that it is hard to realize the revolutionary daring of the first ones to tread out the new path.

Mr. M. A. De Wolfe Howe speaks of the founder of the Boston Symphony as follows: "Henry Lee Higginson, born in New York, November 18, 1834, of the New England stock which for two centuries before his birth had done less for the arts than for the virtues, departed early from the accepted paths of the young men of his time and station. He ought to have graduated from Harvard College, which he entered in 1851 with the class to which Alexander Agassiz and Phillips Brooks belonged. But lacking the best of health, he left it after two years. He ought to have continued—if precedent were to rule—in the Boston counting house of E. and E. Austin, in which he then took employment, but before the end of 1856, he found himself in Europe, where he stayed for four years, devoting himself chiefly to the study of music at Vienna."

Mr. M. A. De Wolfe Howe goes on to quote at length many interesting letters from Higginson to his father explaining fully his aims and ideals. Unfortunately, overwork at the piano, as in the case of many other over-ambitious young men of musical bent, had the result of effectually ruining his hopes of becoming a pianist, through the severe injury done to his arms. He himself states that it became clear to him that he had no talent for playing or composition, that "there was, in short, no soil in which to cultivate a garden." And yet how fortunate for Boston and the world that he was unsuccessful in his ambitions of that time. His ambitions for himself, his egoistic love of music, developed into ambitions for others and a centrifugal love of music, finding its greatest pleasure in the pleasure of others. His failure at that time gave him a more poignant appreciation and love of music and the needs of musicians and music-lovers than anything else could have done. And naturally, the training and experiences he did get were of inestimable value to him in dealing with musicians and understanding musical problems later on.

Higginson returned to the United States to take part in the Civil War. At its conclusion, his marriage and the low state of his finances necessitated active devotion to the business of obtaining a living. Within fifteen years, such was his energy and ability, the time came when he realized he could retire, well provided for. But he also saw that by continuing to work he could earn enough to realize the long-cherished

dream of his heart, an orchestra for Boston. It would have been an easy matter for him to have gone back to Europe where he could have enjoyed all the music he desired, but he had well learned the great secret of true happiness, that joy, to be appreciated to the full, must be shared. In the establishment of an important orchestra for Boston, Mr. Higginson felt that he could most completely obtain his own happiness in music.

With characteristic thoroughness he worked out a plan by which he could establish an orchestra and hire a conductor, guaranteeing all the men a season's salary. Concerts were to be given in the Music Hall at nominal prices, and the deficit to be paid out of his own pocket. Naturally, the appearance of another orchestra, whose future triumphs few could have dreamed of, was resented by those already in existence, especially as the number of musicians in Boston necessitated the weakening of one or more of the old organizations in the strengthening of the new one. However, such obstacles were to have been expected, and Mr. Higginson met them face to face. An indomitable will backing up a real vision can prevail against anything, and during the season of 1881-1882 a first series of twenty concerts was given. The concerts have continued uninterruptedly up to the present day.

Mr. Higginson was not only the founder, but he was the director and guiding intelligence of the orchestra until 1918, a year before his death. At that time he retired from active control, leaving the management in the hands of a Board of Directors, Judge Frederick P Cabot, President, who carry on the work which he began. Salaries and expenses have risen to such alarming heights today that the work of managing the orchestra is more difficult than ever. A deficit is inevitable and the task of keeping it down to a minimum is a herculean one, but one which the efforts and efficient management of the Manager, Mr. W. H. Brennan and his able assistant, Mr. G. E. Judd, carry out in a noteworthy manner. The financial support which Mr. Higginson provided for so long (he is known to have given over a million dollars) is now supplied by public-spirited citizens who generously subscribe to the fund which enables the work of the Boston Symphony Orchestra to go on.

THE CONDUCTORS

The terms of the conductors of the Boston Symphony have been as follows:

Georg Henschel, 1881-1884.
 Wilhelm Gericke, 1884-1889.
 Arthur Nikisch, 1889-1893.
 Emil Paur, 1893-1898.
 Wilhelm Gericke, 1898-1906.
 Karl Muck, 1906-1908.
 Max Fiedler, 1908-1912.
 Karl Muck, 1912-1918.
 Henri Rabaud, 1918-1919.
 Pierre Monteux, 1919-1924.
 Serge Koussevitzky, 1924.

In establishing the orchestra in 1881, Mr. Higginson, while deciding to employ as musicians those already living in Boston, wished to add interest and stimulation by securing a more romantic and exotic figure as conductor. Georg Henschel, then a young man of versatile musicianship, a composer, singer, conductor, had just made a spectacular appearance at a concert of the Harvard Musical Association, where he had conducted his own Concert Overture. Higginson, in common with many others, was amazed by the effects that Henschel achieved from the orchestra, and immediately approached him with an offer to lead the new organization.

Henschel's term was not characterized entirely by smooth sailing. He aroused considerable opposition on many counts, but he had the desirable effect of focussing interest on the struggling orchestra. A less debatable man, enjoying unanimous approval, would probably have killed public interest entirely. At the beginning of the second season a stipulation was made in the musician's contracts by which the Boston Symphony was to possess exclusive rights to their services on certain days, insuring the saving of their best energies for its need. Teaching, of course, was permitted, but the practice of playing in several orchestras was stopped and naturally determined opposition was made to the new clause. But Higginson's will prevailed, as was to have been expected, in

spite of the excited claims that he was trying to make a "corner" in musicians.

As time went on, the concerts grew steadily in popularity, to such an extent that it became extremely difficult to get tickets. A scheme of auctioning off the season tickets came into vogue, but always there were many seats set aside at the modest price of a quarter for those who were willing to wait and rush for their music. The "rush" seats of the Boston Symphony are in themselves a venerable institution. The practice, which continued for many years of giving concerts, was to give the official performance on Saturday night, and a public rehearsal on Friday afternoon. The name "public rehearsal" persisted for a long time after the conductors had discontinued stopping the orchestra; finally the Friday afternoon performances became regular concerts.

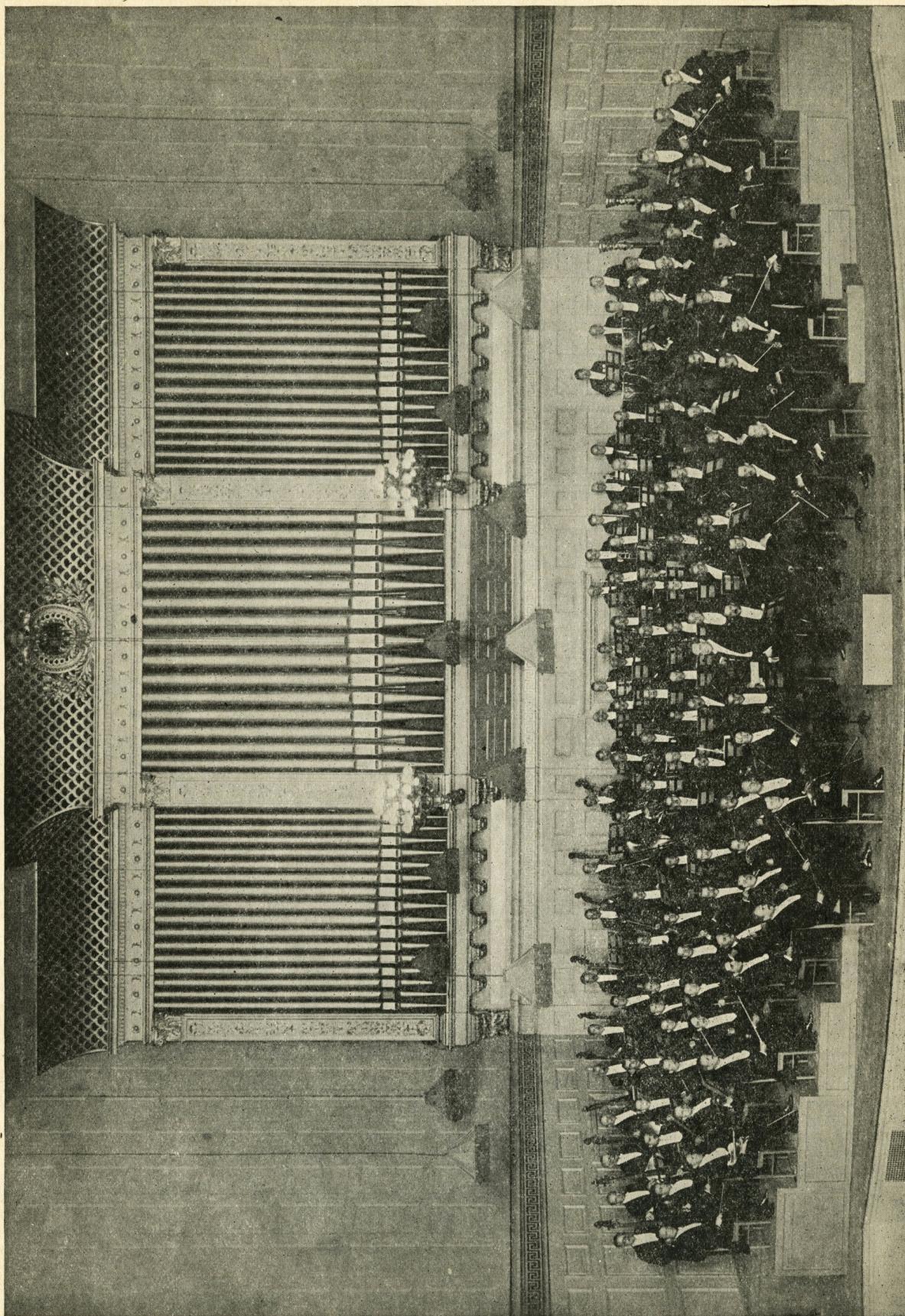
Henschel, especially in his choice of programs—the latter part of which always contained something light, to offset any possible heaviness in the first half—undeniably had a beneficial influence on the progress of the symphony. But as his three years of service drew to a close it became evident that to bring the orchestra to the high levels of international fame further steps would have to be taken. Higginson sought for a man in Europe who would have the greatest effect for good on the young orchestra. Wilhelm Gericke, then a conductor of the Oratorio Concerts given by the Society of Music in Vienna, had had some petty differences of opinion with some of the Opera officials, and to everyone's amazement consented to Higginson's proposition that he come to Boston. His first season was a difficult one, but for the second he was commissioned to bring new talent from Europe to infuse life into the organization, and with the arrival of Franz Knieisel as concert master, and nineteen other young men, the material was at hand for the building up of a great machine.

Gericke was ideally fitted for such a task; he was a drill master, whose insatiable desire for perfection was only equalled by his foresight in obtaining it. His comment when he first came, "There are some musicians, but it is hardly an orchestra!" was no longer true when he left at the end of five season's. Gericke's programs were condemned on some sides, but his practice of putting the concerts on a classical basis was undoubtedly of value at the time. He also made an important step in advance by omitting at one concert the up-till-that-time inevitable soloist. The changes in the personnel of the orchestra led to natural discord, but all differences of such nature have a way of becoming smoothed out in the forward march of the progress of the organization. Gradually the influence of the orchestra spread; western tours were begun and concerts were given in New York. The beginning of the programs later edited by William F. Apthorp and Philip Hale was made during his incumbency by George H. Wilson. "The Pops," "Young People's Concerts" and other innovations were made at this time.

Following the classical period of Mr. Gericke came the romantic ones of Nikisch and Paur. The former, then conductor of the Leipzig City Theatre, found at his disposal a body of men exquisitely trained and perfected in their technique. A poet, a rhapsodist by nature, Mr. Nikisch had an instrument by which he could give full expression to the emotional imagination. The beginning of the exaggerated craze over the conductor aroused considerable ironic comment at the time, but personalities have a way of arousing public interest that less stimulating competency can never do. Nikisch's work was doubtless uneven, there was probably some falling off in the technical skill of the orchestral ensemble, but a great advance in flexibility and imagination was made. The orchestra did not know until the actual performance exactly what Nikisch intended to do; consequently his performance, as some one has said, were as trying as Mr. Gericke's rehearsals.

Emil Paul, the successor of Nikisch at Leipzig, succeeded him also at Boston. Again brilliance and energy held the stage. The number of soloists continued to be cut down and purely symphonic music began to rise higher into its own rights. For Nikisch's romantic feeling, Paur substituted a "dramatic intensity" that found high favor with his audience and critics.

Mr. Gericke's return as conductor for a second time was hailed as the return of the creator to his own orchestra,—praise which was not unjustified, since Nikisch and Paur, well as they played on the instrument, had not added greatly to



THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Serge Koussevitzky, Conductor
(Exclusive Victor Artists)

(Photograph Published by Permission)

it; it was still practically the machine that Gericke had built up, with some additional training in flexibility and versatility. When Gericke returned he found that the rigid discipline so necessary during his first term was no longer so strongly demanded and he was more free to realize his own ideas in the matter of interpretations.

The earlier complaints against the severity of Gericke's programs were resumed, but new works were gradually introduced in ever increasing numbers; those of Richard Strauss leading the way, to the amazement and horror of many who found the blutting sheep of *Don Quixote* and the turmoils and grandiose splendors of the *Heldenleben* exceedingly strong meat.

Symphony Hall, for which plans were begun in 1893, was finally completed in 1900 and opened with considerable ceremony. No longer were the draughts and fire hazards of the old building matters of import for the subscribers! The beauties and acoustic excellences of the new building, now so familiar to Bostonians, are well known. It has an individuality and atmosphere of its own that can hardly be equalled by any other concert hall in the country. The second balcony continued to be thrown open to the "rushers," those who were willing to wait often hours, for the privilege of hearing the Boston Symphony Orchestra for a quarter. (Several years ago the price was doubled, but no abatement in enthusiasm was seen). Also about this time was the establishment of the Pension Fund, for which contributions were received and benefit concerts given each year. Tickets for the subscription concerts which may be turned in by holders unable to use them are sold and the proceeds given to the Endowment Fund.

The name of Mr. Gericke is bound up with that of the Boston Symphony. To him it owes much, as do the people of Boston; a debt which they have always amply recognized. A few seasons ago the Funeral March from Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony was played twice; once in commemoration of Gericke and once in memory of Kriesel, for so many years his able lieutenant. Their death marks the passing of two of the orchestra's greatest members.

To fill the void left so achingly vacant by the resignation of Gericke, Dr. Karl Muck, by special permission of the German Emperor, was taken from the conductorship of the Royal Opera House in Berlin. Of his reign, interrupted by the term of Max Fiedler (another fine musician who gave a hearing to many new composers) it is hard to speak adequately.

To many he represents the peak of musicianship and the perfection of the art of conducting. A man of broader sweep of mind and imagination, he went beyond Gericke in his capacity for expression, while still keeping the same powerful grip on the technical abilities and training of the orchestra. His introduction of the "unified" program, by which a concert would leave a single, consistent impression on the mind of the listener, longer concerts and a greater variety of musical works, the limitation on soloists that in every case they must be accompanied by the orchestra rather than a piano, and other innovations are but the externals of his services. His breadth of learning, the depth of his sympathy, the grandeur of his conceptions were the true gifts which he had for Boston and the world. Despite the circumstances of his deportation from the country in 1918 and all the insane hysteria which war times and war time propaganda raised up, his place in the hearts of thousands of Bostonians and Americans has never been, and can never be, pre-empted. Dr. Muck was a Musician and a Man;—unfortunately, he was also a German at a time when this country became engaged in war with Germany. The Muck issue is past and done with now, we are told; certainly this is no place to dwell on it. But a past thing or not, it has not been forgotten, nor should it ever be so. Dr. Muck gave the best years of his life, the finest fruits of his genius to Boston; as to its gratitude, let someone speak when the time is ripe. He is an old man now, broken and unhappy, appearing but seldom to conduct the works which he knows so well and can interpret so profoundly and with such divine insight. But he can rest assured that there are many—those who sat under his inspired baton and those have heard of his readings only through the enthusiastic lips of their elders—who hold for him and will always hold for him the deepest respect, the greatest admiration, and the most whole-hearted love.

In 1918-1919, Henri Rabaud, the French composer, took the reins for a single season, to be succeeded by his countryman,

Pierre Monteux, noted as a ballet conductor. To the latter fell the difficult task of rebuilding the orchestra, shattered by the departure of Dr. Muck and an unsuccessful strike to unionize the players. To his tremendous task he brought a keen musical intelligence and patience. Music by contemporary composers, especially Frenchmen, and music of the dance was his special forte. Not a figure to command great public enthusiasm nevertheless, his sturdy labors, his polished and graceful bearing won a deep respect and friendship from all who heard him. Particularly in the field of program-making he was almost unsurpassable. The list of new works which he introduced to America makes a splendid record. The balance, clarity, and Gallic salt which were his special characteristics gave many Americans a new outlook on music.

In 1924, at the expiration of Monteux's five-year contract, and after many mysterious rumors and false alarms came Serge Koussevitzky, famous as a virtuoso on the double-bass and as conductor of the "Concerts Koussevitzky" in Russia and France, also (to the horror of many of the Friday afternoon "Old Guard") an enthusiastic friend of ultra-modern works and composers. The old subscribers, appeased by the courtly French manner of Monteux in introducing new and monstrous experiments, were rather fearlessly titillated by the thoughts that some horrible new mechanistic art was to take the place of the "good old" music so familiar and loved.

But they were agreeably disappointed; the dynamic personality and the dramatic power of Koussevitzky swept all before him. There were new works, to be sure, but not so incomprehensible after all, while to the old ones Koussevitzky brought new and daring ideas and readings, violently debated by some on first hearing, but which have had the undeniable effect of stimulating sluggish interest in "classics" which had begun to be taken as a matter of course.

The features of Koussevitzky's conductorship have been the enormous development of the orchestra's technical and interpretative resources, the increased standing which concert tours have given it in other cities, the unprecedented attendance, the generous attention given modern works, the renewed interest generated in the older ones, the increased number of purely orchestral or orchestral and choral concerts, and the elaborate observation of the centenaries of Beethoven in 1927 and Schubert in 1928. The festival on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of Beethoven's death was probably the most remarkable tribute ever undertaken in this country. Within the space of a week concerts were given which included the complete nine symphonies, the *Missa Solemnis*, a number of chamber music works, and commemorative exercises for which Ernest Newman—invited from England for this particular purpose—made the principal address.

During recent years the demand for seats has steadily augmented, and the "waiting lists" of prospective subscribers for season seats have grown to an alarming extent. The demand for concerts is difficult to assuage. To the regular series of twenty-four pairs of concerts in Symphony Hall (Friday afternoons and Saturday evenings), must be added a series of nine concerts in Sander's Theatre (Memorial Hall, Harvard University), Cambridge; two series of five concerts each in Symphony Hall on Monday evenings and Tuesday afternoons; Two or three pairs of Young Peoples' Concerts; and two Pension Fund Concerts (customarily given in conjunction with the Harvard and Radcliffe choral societies).

Outside Boston there are regular series of concerts in New York and Brooklyn, a series of five in Providence, two each in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Washington, and one each in a number of other cities. Trips as far as to Chicago and Montreal are sometimes made, but of late an effort has been made to avoid as far as possible the more lengthly and wearisome trips. The strain on the conductor has become almost unbearably intense, and relieved only to a slight degree by the growing practice of inviting occasional guest conductors for a single concert, or Mr. Richard Burgin, Assistant Conductor and Concertmaster, as conductor for one pair of concerts each season. During the season of 1925-1926 broadcasting of the Saturday evening concerts was begun and continued until the present season, when it was discontinued.

At the end of the regular season the far-famed "Pops" begin,—popular concerts at a nominal price at which there is opportunity for the enjoyment of refreshments, smoking, and conversation, as well as a diversified musical program.

During the last two seasons, the fortieth and forty-first, Alfredo Casella, distinguished Italian composer, conductor, and writer, has conducted. Before him, Agide Jacchia, Director of the Boston Conservatory of Music, was for ten years the familiar and well-liked leader of the season of lighter music in Boston. In Mr. Casella's hands the programs have given outlet to a greater number of more serious works, although not to the extent observable at the Lewisohn Stadium in New York, or the Hollywood Bowl concerts in Los Angeles. Discussion has raged over the innovations; the public's taste is eternally capricious, but there should be no reason why the "Pops" programs should not steer a successful middle course between the Scylla of a regular symphony concert and the Charybdis of all musical fluff and cream.

THE MEN

Before going on to the recordings of the Boston Symphony, mention (small enough in comparison with what is deserved) should be made of the men of the orchestra themselves. For, after all, conductors may come and go their meteoric way, but without the players who comprise the instrument on which they play, performances and conductor's fame would be impossible. In an orchestra every man must subordinate himself to the imagination of the conductor; he is the intelligent, living key on which the latter plays. How necessary, then, that his technique be perfect, he mind alert for any contingency, ready at any moment to adjust his playing to the sudden caprice or demand of the director. An orchestra is an ensemble of which every member plays a vital part. It is possible to mention by name only a few here, many of whom have served years in the Boston Symphony, but to the others unnamed goes also credit which they so richly deserve.

Mention has already been made of Franz Knieisel, for so many years concert-master, and Richard Burgin, the present holder of the post. Also at the first desk sits Julius Theodorowicz, in the place once held by Professor Charles Martin Loeffler, the composer. Jean Bedetti, principal violoncellist; Georges Laurent, first flutist, and moving spirit of the Boston Flute Players' Club; Ferdinand Gillet, worthy successor to the great Longy, long a well-loved figure in the Boston orchestra; Jean Lefranc, principal of the viola section; Abdon Laus, bassoon player unsurpassed; Georges Hamelin, principal clarinetist; Louis Speyer, English horn soloist; Georges Mager, who accomplishes such miracles with modern trumpet solos; Georg Boettcher, able successor to the great Wendler as principal of the incomparable horn choir; Albert Ritter, the timpanist;—these are but a few of the many who might be mentioned.

The last year has seen the passing of several veteran members, particularly Richard Kurth (for forty-two years a member of the orchestra) and Alwin Schroeder, distinguished 'cellist, both of whom lived but for a few years after their retirement from the symphony. Barth, 'cellist, is almost the last of the "old-timers," now that Holy, harpist, Hofmann, violinist, and Arthur Brooke, flutist, have retired.

The influence of these musicians in a community cannot be estimated. Not only in the orchestra, but in teaching and outside musical activities, and in the city's social and artistic life, they have meant much to Boston.

THE RECORDINGS

Until this fall, Mr. Koussevitzky has never recorded, but the Boston Symphony itself, under the direction of Dr. Karl Muck, then conductor, has had one recording experience—and a notable one—to its credit. It was in 1914, when the orchestra was approaching the ideal toward which Dr. Muck aimed, and when the art of recording was in its infancy. The records made by Muck at that time, of which only two were ever issued, were among the first great successes of the phonograph in recording a symphony orchestra. They were the result of a series of extensive experimentation in the laboratories of the Victor Talking Machine Company, and all the startling developments that have been made since that time cannot dim the brilliance (absolute as well as relative) of these records.

It is hard to realize today the effect they had upon musicians of that time. "At last," exclaimed Victor Herbert, on hearing them, "it is possible to present the performances of a symphony orchestra! Now, everything is possible!" There is a well authenticated story relating the effect of the first record, that of the finale of Tchaikowsky's *Fourth* symphony, upon the men who had made it. Dr. Muck, Victor Herbert,

and some of the Victor men had been delayed and reached the laboratory sometime after the orchestra on the day they were to make the other recordings. As they came to the door of the recording studio, someone exclaimed, "What are those men rehearsing the Tchaikowsky again for? They should be working on the *Lohengrin* prelude." But on opening the door it was discovered that they had been hearing the reproduction of the record made the day before. (In those days the wax master could not be "played back" immediately, as it can be today.)

The Victor Company does well to retain these two disks in their catalogue. Not only their historical significance, but their sentimental associations and their own absolute artistic merit entitle them to a permanent place in recorded literature.

But they were of another era: a past era of the orchestra and a past era of recording. Since their issue the orchestra has undergone a great revolution and a great reconstruction. The "Golden Age" of the Boston Symphony passed with Dr. Muck, but the preparatory work of Monteux, and the herculean labors of Koussevitzky have brought into being a new Boston Symphony, an orchestra acclaimed by able and unprejudiced musicians not only the superior of the older organization, but a vehicle second in expressive powers, in brilliance and color, to none in the world. The processes of recording, too, have been revolutionized. Where before a band of some forty musicians was clustered uncomfortably around the horn of the acoustical apparatus, today the entire orchestra records while playing on its own stage in Symphony Hall. The records are not merely of Koussevitzky and the Boston orchestra, they are also of the familiar and well-loved hall itself.

The records themselves are dealt with in detail elsewhere, in editorial comment, review, and the interview with Mr. Koussevitzky. Here, it is perhaps sufficient to say that they were made in Symphony Hall, Boston, the week of Armistice Day in November, and that there is unofficial assurance that there will be other recording dates and releases. Their success is assured in advance. Mr. Koussevitzky is a conductor of unbounded dramatic and emotional powers. During his first years with the Boston Symphony one thought of him primarily as a virtuoso, but time has mellowed and broadened his as well as the orchestra. The concerts of this present season have revealed him at the summit of his powers. Never did the orchestra possess as many individual talents or as homogeneous and precise an ensemble never were its merits put to better use than at present. The records made today catch not only the characteristic qualities of conductor and orchestra, but they capture these qualities at the moment they are in their finest flower. Mr. Koussevitzky was very wise in waiting until now to record. His instrument is in its best voice, and he, too, is an artist of keener insight and broader sympathies than he was even four years ago. Above all, he has developed the capacity for taking pains, for building his superb tonal and climactic edifices upon the secure and laboriously constructed foundation of refinement and accuracy of detail.

THE FUTURE

What does the future hold for the Boston Symphony Orchestra? Much that is fine, if the progress made continually during its career even over the obstacles of temporary setbacks can be taken for an indication. It has won a real place in the hearts of Bostonians and in the musical institutions of the country. Symphonic music, both classical and modern, has acquired a firm place; the phrase "as dull as a symphony concert" is unconceivable today. Music, composers, conductors, artists, all have taken on a new vitality it seems; certainly the Symphony plays a more important part in the life of the community than it ever did before. And it is always growing. The difficulties have been enormous, especially in the matter of expenses and public-spirited citizens have had to supply the money that in Europe is supplied by the government itself. But the support has not been lacking, the characteristic American desire to have the best has proved a valuable incentive, and the results are evident.

One little story illustrates the feeling toward the Boston Symphony. For many years several concerts have been given in Providence, R. I. This last season, the old Infantry Hall where the concerts were held was doomed, and for lack of a suitable place, the management regretfully informed Providence that the concerts which had taken place for so many

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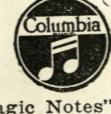
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1621-D 10 in. 75c.	Old Man Sunshine Little Boy Blue Bird. Don't Be Like That. Vocals . Lee Morse and Her Blue Grass Boys
1620-D 10 in. 75c.	That's What Puts the Sweet in Home Sweet Home. My Arms Are Open. (From "Earl Carroll Vanities"). Ed Lowry.
1608-D 10 in. 75c.	Since You Came Into My Life. 'Tho' You Threw Me Down. Vocals . Oscar Grogan.
1626-D 10 in. 75c.	Woman Disputed I Love You. (Theme Song from Motion Picture "The Woman Disputed"). Marie. (Theme Song from Motion Picture "The Awakening"). Vocals . Pete Woolery.
1602-D 10 in. 75c.	High Up on a Hill-Top. The Whole World Knows I Love You. Vocals . Don Roberts.
1614-D 10 in. 75c.	I Loved You Then As I Love You Now. (Theme Song from Motion Picture "Dancing Daughters"). Sally of My Dreams. (Theme Song from Motion Picture "Mother Knows Best"). Vocals . James Melton.
1577-D 10 in. 75c.	I'm Sorry Sally. Good Night. Vocals . Maurice Gunsky.
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in twenty-two Foreign Languages.

years would have to be discontinued. Without revealing anything to the Symphony, a band of citizens of Providence courageously went ahead, raised a fund, bought out the performances of the expensive new E. F. Albee Theatre for the nights of the concerts, and then when all was arranged, informed the management of the Symphony that the orchestra could continue to appear in Providence, more as guests than as a visiting organization. Such a tribute well illustrates the place the Boston Symphony holds. It is not a matter of civic or local pride merely; it is something far broader and far finer.

Now that the orchestra has begun to record, its influence can extend beyond the limits set by the restrictions of actual concert performances. The intensely individual and moving readings of classical and modern works with which Mr. Koussevitzky has aroused and stirred all those who have heard him can now be heard by every music lover, no matter though he may live in Shanghai, China, or Capetown, South Africa.

Bostonians are naturally proud of their Symphony, its distinguished history, and its superb talents. Its fame and influence have never been restricted to Boston alone, but now, through its recordings, they may spread still farther and with intensified power. The rest of the country and of the world, now able to share our enjoyment in the orchestra, will surely share our pride as well.

Serge Koussevitzky

By ALFRED H. MEYER

Editor's Note:—Many of our readers are doubtlessly already familiar with either the work or the ever-growing reputation of Mr. Alfred H. Meyer, the celebrated and oft-quoted "A. H. M." of "The Boston Transcript." Mr. Meyer's annotations of new works played at concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra appear regularly in the "Transcript" and have been widely copied by program annotators throughout the country. As a close student of Mr. Koussevitzky since the latter first took command of the Boston Symphony, Mr. Meyer is uncommonly well fitted to write on the Boston conductor, the more so in that he has had the privilege of being present at many rehearsals and observing Koussevitzky's work with the orchestra directly and at close hand. In addition to his brilliant reviews and annotations in the "Transcript" Mr. Meyer also gives lectures on music at Wellesley College and writes program notes for the Boston Philharmonic and other orchestras. This year he has been chosen by the Boston Symphony to give explanatory talks at the concerts for young people.

TO say that genius is born and not made savors of banality. Who indeed can define genius, or place its limits, or trace its origins? To attempt to do so almost invariably leads to confusion. But in its presence, even the slow-witted recognize the something that is so difficult to define. To see genius at work one need go only to Boston's Symphony Hall on a Friday afternoon or a Saturday evening, or on certain Monday evenings or Tuesday afternoons. For at those times the Boston Symphony Orchestra is giving its concerts, and its leadership is in the hands of a true genius of the art of conducting—Serge Koussevitzky.

Serge Alexandrovitch Koussevitzky was born at Tver, in northern Russia, in the year 1874. Music attracted him at an early age, for when he was only twelve years old he was conductor of the orchestra in the local theatre. At the age of fourteen he entered the Conservatory at Moscow. There his principal study was the double bass. He became remarkably proficient and in time (1900) replaced his teacher as Professor of Double Bass. Not content with this achievement he toured Russia and Western Europe as a virtuoso of his instrument for ten years. Everywhere he was hailed as a very great artist.

But even in those early years, Mr. Koussevitzky aimed higher than the life and accomplishments of a virtuoso. He had tasted the rewards of conducting; and conducting was his life's goal. In 1907 he formed an orchestra from pupils of the Hochschule in Berlin, where he was in the conducting class of Arthur Nikisch. The following year he was guest

conductor at a concert of the London Philharmonic. And in 1909 he formed his own orchestra for the purpose of giving concerts at Moscow and St. Petersburg (now Leningrad). Being a man of means, he spared not in rehearsal. Indeed rehearsing was carried to a point at which it secured refinements impossible under the conditions under which orchestras generally find it necessary to work. With this orchestra he frequently gave festivals of the works of single composers, as for example, Beethoven festivals. He also gave much attention to the works of contemporary Russian composers and to contemporary music in general. Skriabin in particular won his favor. Mr. Koussevitzky has always believed in the power of music to make its appeal to the masses. But the music, in his opinion, must be the best of music, and must be superlatively performed. He is thus dead set against the idea of "playing down" to the masses in order "gradually" to "educate" them. With his own orchestra he was able to perform experiments, putting to the test his convictions. In the summer of 1909 he chartered a steamer plying the River Volga, embarked with his orchestra, and gave concerts in the river towns. The scheme proved surprisingly successful and was repeated each succeeding summer.

Exigencies of the war made it impossible for him to keep up his own orchestra. But through the early war years he continued to give concerts with various Russian orchestras. At the time of the revolution he was made director of the Russian State Orchestras—older organizations much inferior to the orchestra he himself had built. Finally in 1920 he succeeded in leaving Russia for Western Europe. And in Paris from 1921 to 1924 he gave each year two series of four concerts each. He also conducted in various other European centers, particularly London. In 1924 he was called to the conductorship of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which post he fills with great distinction. But he still continues one annual series of four concerts in Paris, in May and June. Several musicians play under him in both orchestras and many works appear on both his Boston and his Paris programs.

In Boston Mr. Koussevitzky's work has been chiefly one of refinement of standards. The Boston Symphony Orchestra had acquired world fame under Dr. Karl Muck. War passions and an ill-fated attempt at unionization among the men dealt that prestige a severe blow. The amiable and correct Henri Rabaud (1918-1919) did not go far on the road of progress with the reorganized orchestra. To his successor, Pierre Monteux (1919-1924) is due much of the credit for the recapturing of standards that had been temporarily lost. During his regime the Boston Symphony Orchestra again became quickly an orchestra unquestionably of the first rank. In this condition Mr. Koussevitzky found it, a group of excellent players, excellently routined, having large accomplishments to their credit (such as the production of Stravinsky's "Le Sacre du Printemps", at the time counted an undertaking of the first magnitude), awaiting only the touch of the impelling force of genius to take it out of the rank and file of "first rank orchestras" and to place it in a position of leadership among them. This force Serge Koussevitzky has been abundantly to supply.

Not frequently has Mr. Koussevitzky been heard as a virtuoso on the double bass in this country. The first time was a little over a year ago, when he played at a private reception for the men of the orchestra. The writer was present at the rehearsal of the orchestra the following morning when Mr. Boaz Pillar, contra-bassoonist, made a short address of appreciation of the conductor's playing, saying among other things that abroad he had once amusingly heard him referred to as the "third great K of stringed instruments,—Kreisler, Kasals, Koussevitzky." Though one may smile at

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Serge Koussevitzky

the illiteracy of the author of the remark, one must agree absolutely with his critical judgment. Those who have heard Mr. Koussevitzky play know that he is in no wise second to either Mr. Kreisler or Mr. Casals. Incidentally—if such a thing were possible—his playing for his men increased their loyalty to him, for now they know that “the boss can do it himself.” Mr. Koussevitzky has also appeared in public on several occasions in Boston and New York. And when Brown University bestowed upon him the degree of Doctor of Music, he played his double bass at the exercises. It is a full-sized double bass that he plays, and not the smaller variety sometimes employed by virtuosos.

When Mr. Koussevitzky stands before his orchestra, though not in any sense a large man, he is a figure of commanding presence. His beat, though highly unconventional—and therefore exceedingly expressive—is remarkably clear. There is no such thing as getting lost for the musician who follows it conscientiously. The range of devices which Mr. Koussevitzky uses in making known his wishes to his men, in goading them on to heights of excitement are practically without limit. Hands are high or low or far to either side. Facial muscles are frequently in play and mouth and lips play no small part in making known the desired expressive effects. And yet, despite such a wide range of conductor's signals, despite the ability of whipping his men to white heat by them, Mr. Koussevitzky knows how to remain within certain limits of poise. To his audience he never appears the madman wildly gesticulating.

Of course the work of building his effects is done entirely in rehearsal. No conductor could depend upon personal magnetism alone to secure what he needs from his men. But to produce in them the proper state of mind at the exact moment when the effect is needed, to recall to them with utmost vividness the effect as planned and rehearsed, conductors' gesturing is calculated. And Mr. Koussevitzky's is 100 percent efficient.

Mr. Koussevitzky has trained his men to a state of finish that seems to many the last word of perfection. Strings now obtain a lustrous beauty of tone such as violinists and 'cellists may dream about, but seldom hear. And from the mass of them he obtains at times a depth of sonority, a power, a white, searing heat that even surprise listeners most intimately acquainted with the possibilities of orchestral performance. Similarly, he had pointed and sharpened his brass until he secures from it effects of the greatest possible brilliance. While wood-winds, trained in his own image, give him the most varied hues and tints of orchestral color. The Boston Symphony orchestra of the present he has made into a instrument unexcelled in responsiveness to his utmost demands.

As an interpreter Mr. Koussevitzky is a musician who loves the beauty of the sinuous, expressive melodic line, who knows how to mould it artfully and exquisitely, to draw from it its last secret of expressive effect. He is supreme as an orchestral lyricist. Further, with him emotion runs high. Never is the dramatic content of a work lost or understated. Mr. Koussevitzky is a great dramatizing force with whatever he undertakes. But at the same time his work remains as beautifully proportioned, as skilfully balanced as it is dramatically stimulating.

And lastly, Mr. Koussevitzky is a conductor of the widest catholicity of taste. There is not a field of music into which he has not delved deeply in his four years in Boston. The “classics” have been played and replayed. The modern “standard works are practically all in the active repertory of the orchestra. The newer moderns are being presented—often from manuscript—at the rate of one or two, sometimes even three, a week. More, Mr. Koussevitzky often adds “novelties” out of the forgotten past. Bach and Handel have been restored to the Boston concerts. Their little known contemporaries often give us a pleasant surprise. And with the classics themselves, Mr. Koussevitzky is a revitalizing force. There is no rattling of dead bones when he plays them, no smell of the dust of tradition. As freshly they come from under his baton as though they were manuscript performances; as justly as truth itself.

A year and a half ago, when Beethoven centenaries were in order, Mr. Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, with the assistance of the Glee Clubs of Harvard and Radcliffe Colleges in the ninth symphony, played the entire nine symphonies of Beethoven in a week. Mr. Ernst Newman was invited from London to take part in the centenary ceremonies. This outstanding critic at the time expressed himself in the most glowing terms possible in admiration of the conductor's orchestra, and of his Beethoven. Again, when the orchestra made its trip to Chicago, musicians report applause and excitement of such magnitude as one might expect from Latin audiences, but never from staid Americans. Which is twofold testimony that the Boston Symphony Orchestra is at the zenith of orchestral power. And this is the accomplishment of the genius who is now guiding its destinies.—Serge Koussevitzky.

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An Interview with Serge Koussevitzky

By ROBERT DONALDSON DARRELL

It is an eventful day when one is given the opportunity of meeting in the flesh a glamorous figure of the concert stage, and of learning from the lips of the musician himself the ideals which have animated and directed his performances. And if the artist is Koussevitzky . . . Koussevitzky, who in his four years at Boston has revealed so many and so varied new worlds of music, whose performances have clarified new works and re-vitalized old ones, whose phonographic debut has been so long and so eagerly awaited. . . . Koussevitzky, the most arresting and significant figure among modern conductors . . . small wonder that I received with joy the assignment of interviewing the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra on the occasion of his first having recorded.

A "vacation" week at the symphony, when the assistant conductor conducted in Mr. Koussevitzky's stead, giving him a brief respite from the strain of a severe and extensive schedule, provided an opportunity for the interview. Through the kindness of Mr. G. E. Judd, Assistant Manager of the Boston Symphony, I was introduced to the conductor's secretary and an appointment was arranged for me at the Koussevitzky Boston home, in Jamaica Plain, not fifteen minutes walk from THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW Studio. While waiting in the reception room I was put at my ease at once by a distant cousin—perhaps—of our own "Buster", an alert terrier, who examined me circumspectly, submitted to having his throat scratched, and then politely retired to a comfortable chair and cushion of his own, from which even the energetic measures of *Petrouchka*, later, failed to disturb him.

Mr. Koussevitzky's concert manner, as all those who have had the privilege of seeing him can testify, is superbly in the grand manner,—of a dignity which is tempered with such ease and unaffectedness as to give one an accurate indication of the man's artistic stature even before a note has been played. Beside him many other conductors strike one as pretentious, ill at ease, some even grotesque. Off-stage the Koussevitzky presence is no less unmistakable, but it is more relaxed, more personal. He possesses the rare gift of supreme relaxation: every gesture is exquisitely poised and leisurely. One feels that his body is an instrument as perfectly under his command as the virtuoso orchestra on which he plays. Such simplicity and ease of manner could not fail to put even the most nervous visitor no less at ease.

He apologized for his English, but his depreciatory "not good" was over-modest, for he had obviously a feeling for the accurate word. When it escaped him, he spoke rapidly to his secretary, with an expressiveness that sometimes made her translation almost superfluous. Or she would re-phrase my questions and they would chatter briskly for a moment, and as she translated his reply, he nodded eagerly, frequently adding some further comment. In his words as in his conducting, it is apparent that the man knows very clearly and emphatically exactly what he is driving at, and that he spares no effort to achieve a perfect expression of his thoroughly preconceived ideas.

I asked him if his new Boston Symphony and double-bass solo records for Victor were his first, if he had never recorded with any European orchestra. Never. Always he had declined to record, realizing that the orchestras were not adequate for the severity of the demands of recording. For recording there must be a perfect ensemble, perfect precision. There can be no mistakes. In Europe, the orchestras are not like ours in America. The men there are excellent musicians, but the orchestras themselves are not permanent, homogeneous. The personnel changes considerably; there are a number of conductors, each with different methods and aims; there are fewer rehearsals. But in the Boston the opportunities have been ideal. For over four years Koussevitzky has worked with the one orchestra, incessantly strengthening, drilling, perfecting it. Now the orchestra's consciousness is permeated with the exact conception of his readings, and he has developed a medium for his expression which can accurately and completely achieve his every intention.

Then, too, the phonograph and recording processes until recently were less capable of catching this perfection of detail upon which the essence of his performances must depend. There will be further improvements, of course, but the phonograph today is a miraculous instrument. . . . I pressed him to state what directions further improvements would take, but he shook his head. "We must not criticize the phonograph. It can now capture the spirit of a work, its *meaning*, and that is what we must demand."

I questioned him on his feelings while recording. Yes, there is a greater mental tension and strain. Both conductor and men sense the significance of the occasion and the necessity for unremitting care. The trifling slips which pass unnoticed in concert cannot appear in the recorded performance, every detail of which is unchangeably reproduced, a musical photograph whose every detail is open to scrutiny. Does the absence of an audience affect him? Koussevitzky smiled and shook his head very insistently. "I have no time to think whether the audience is there or not!" Every effort is concentrated on attaining the ideal conception of the music. Every thought must be for the music alone. (And indeed I have often observed in concert Koussevitzky's supreme absorption in the music at hand; every nerve, every muscle, every thought is for it alone. Until the work is finished nothing in the world beyond it possesses reality for him. Once a defective ventilator broadcast the smoke of burning rubbish throughout the hall and sent fully one-half the audience scurrying, but Koussevitzky played on in sublime oblivion of the disturbance behind him; the building might have veritably burned down before his concentrated attention on the performance would have been diverted.)

When a recording has been finished and the wax disk is "played back," the effect is "extraordinary." His face lighted up and he gestured with infinite expressiveness. "A miracle! Extraordinary! to hear the music again immediately. That is at first, of course. Later, one begins to criticize . . ." A detail is found unsatisfactory. Perhaps the English horn part cannot be clearly heard. Re-playing, perhaps a change in the player's position is necessary.

The subject turned to the significance of the phonograph, to Mr. Koussevitzky's mind especially noteworthy for young musicians and music students, and in making modern music better known and understood. The opportunity of hearing and comparing several conductors' versions of the same work was also stressed. I told him that many record collectors followed the disks with miniature scores, and he nodded very approvingly and commented on the particular value of the phonograph in allowing closer and more frequent study of modern works than the necessarily limited number of concert performances can give.

His unflagging championship of the moderns is well known. Strawinski, Scriabin, Prokofieff, a host of others, have been his personal friends. Many of their works appear in the "Edition Russe" of the noted publishing company founded by Mr. Koussevitzky and his wife. He has never wearied of playing their works in public and in throwing all his energies into making his audiences understand and love them as he does himself. And so it is peculiarly fitting that his record debut should be made in works of Strawinski and Ravel, works of which his performances are universally and justly acclaimed as incomparable.

But while he hopes to record many more modern compositions, he will not neglect the classics. He mentioned several Beethoven works which he planned to do, a delightful promise for those who had the pleasure of hearing (and for those who were so unfortunate as to miss) his unforgettable centenary concerts in 1927, or the liberal sprinkling of Beethoven in the regular concert programs.

We spoke of Sibelius, whose symphonies he has played with such masterly effectiveness and overwhelming success in the concert hall, and he seemed much interested in the fact that none of these had been recorded. Perhaps this most lamentable omission in recorded literature will soon be remedied. Those who know Koussevitzky's performances of

the Sibelius works will realize just what can be looked forward to!

My list of questions was by this time exhausted and Mr. Koussevitzky reverted to his favorite topic, his orchestra. "Ravel's *Daphne* is very hard to play. The orchestra must know the music perfectly, and even then it is very difficult. *Petrouchka*, too . . . very, very difficult music. But for four years I have worked with the orchestra and now . . . you shall hear." His secretary put the first disk of *Petrouchka* on the imposing Orthophonic in the music room. I listened, enthralled. Here at last was the Boston Symphony Orchestra, known so well in concert, caught in every characteristic by the phonograph. I recognized the familiar solos, Mr. Laurent's flute, Mr. Gillet's oboe, Mr. Mager's trumpet, above all that individual and inimitable color and feeling which is the Boston Symphony's, and Koussevitzky's, alone.

Mr. Koussevitzky followed the record intently, lightly sketching with his hand a crescendo or an accent. "I am very pleased with the records," he said, "very pleased." And I could not wonder, for it was obvious that he striving for perfection of detail had resulted in an almost incomparable precision of execution and accuracy of nuances and dynamics. It was not "as good" as his concert reading, it was better; it was uncannily close to perfection.

My time was already up, but before I left, I told Mr. Koussevitzky something about the widespread and insistent demand there has been for him to record. Readers of THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW in Japan, China, South America, New Zealand, all over the world, have written in to ask when it will be possible for them to hear the far-famed Koussevitzky performances. Mr. Koussevitzky and his secretary exchanged smiles; he was evidently pleased, as who would not be? He spoke again of the seriousness and sense of responsibility entailed in playing for records. The significance of recording has unquestionably impressed him very deeply. It is a thought-provoking commentary on the common and decidedly ill-use of the term "virtuoso conductor" that this virtuoso of virtuosos has approached the task of recording with but a single purpose in mind, that of transferring undistorted an ideal conception of a great musical work to the shellac disks. His own unbounded interpretative talents, the surpassing brilliance of the orchestra he has labored so faithfully to perfect, are all but a means to an end, and not an end in themselves.

Koussevitzky's admirers and the admirers of the works which he has recorded and is about to record need not regret that his phonographic debut has been so long delayed. The actual event finds both the man and the vehicle he has perfected at the apex of their powers. And the forgetfulness of self, the submergence of everything to the spirit of the music, has revealed—as it always reveals—the true personality of the musician. The records of *Petrouchka* are first of all *Petrouchka*, it is true. But they are Koussevitzky no less. And the door in Jamaica Plain that closed between me and one of the truly outstanding musical personalities of today, will open to every one who plays his records. In them one may find the sincere artist, the lamenbent individuality, the transcendent interpretative genius that are Koussevitzky himself.

Correspondence

The Editor does not accept any responsibility for opinions expressed by correspondents. No notice will be taken of unsigned letters, but only initials or a pseudonym will be printed if the writer so desires. Contributions of general interest to our readers are welcomed. They should be brief and written on one side of the paper only. Address all letters, to CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN, Editorial Department, THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW, 47 Hampstead Road, Jamaica Plain, Boston, Mass.

MR. HARROLD'S ON RECENT CORRESPONDENCE

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

The scant two pages allowed for correspondence in the Schubert issue gave me some uneasy moments, as I feared that perhaps you felt it necessary permanently to curtail the space devoted to this always stimulating feature of the

magazine. Much to my delight the "column" in the December issue expanded to its normal proportions; evidently no permanent change is being planned. It surely would be a source of great regret to the large majority of your readers if the Correspondence were no longer "featured" as it has been in the past year.

I was particularly interested by "Historian's" list of prospective centennials, even if it is rather disappointing in its revelation of no anniversaries of paramount significance for the very near future. However, the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dvorak's death which falls on May 1, 1929, is an important occasion for suitable observance. I presume that it will be observed rather elaborately in Dvorak's native Bohemia, but America has a peculiar claim on Dvorak also, and it would be fitting that we do not allow the date to pass unmemorialized. Possibly by that time another of his symphonies will be recorded to add to the famous "From the New World" and the less well known Symphony No. 4, in G, which I note you state to be currently released by the British Brunswick Company. I should suggest No. 3. in F, as a worthy recording choice; also some of the choral works hitherto unrecorded.

(By the way, where, nowadays, is the Dr. Vojan who used to write so concisely and authoritatively on Bohemian composers for the early issues of THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW? I have long been looking forward to seeing some more of his excellent work. I sincerely trust that he had not joined the ranks of the "lost leaders" which already seem to have swallowed up friends Vories and Dr. Britzius!)

F. M.'s letter on the subject of these "deserters" tickled my funny-bone unmercifully. Not since the celebrated letter on "Nuts" have I read anything one-half as amusing in the Correspondence Column. And there is more than a grain of truth revealed by F. M.'s energetic thrashing. Poor Mr. Benedict seems very hurt about it and very quick to claim that the campaign for lowered prices did not originate with him, he "merely joined in with his opinions after others had started the discussion." But as usual the innocent bystander gets hurt! Some of his points are well taken, however, although it is obvious that Mr. Benedict is not very well acquainted with trade conditions. In fact, he honestly admits as much. Unfortunately, his desire for enlightenment is not likely to be satisfied, at least through the medium of the public press, as phonographic costs and prices, sales sheets, etc., can hardly be thrown open to the general public. I hope Mr. Benedict has read my own modest discourse on this subject (in the October issue); if not, I beg to refer it to him, for it presents a few points from the manufacturers' angle which must be considered in any impartial examination of the problem.

I can also point out a convincing example of record costs. A large symphony orchestra recently spent three "sessions" recording. At the most, five records were procured from these three sittings. The orchestra numbered 110 men, which brings the salary cost up to \$4,950.00 exclusive of extra bonuses to some of the first desk men, exclusive of the conductor's share, exclusive of a myriad miscellaneous expenses. Then add the traveling expenses of the group of recording engineers, the transportation of the recording apparatus, the cost of the preliminary negotiations, and you will have at least some idea of the cost of recording. And this is only the beginning, of course. The records must now be manufactured, labelled, perhaps put in albums, advertised, distributed, and sold—all before any returns at all are seen. It doesn't require great powers of business acumen to see that the records must be sold in enormous quantities if any net profit is to be made. And there is always the possibility of something going mechanically wrong in the electroplating or the pressing which would render the whole work valueless.

In the record manufacturing business, as in the oft-referred to butcher business, it is not all profit.

Or take an example from the acoustical days. In conversation with a German musician, well versed in recording experience, I learned that in making the famous Polydor set of Mahler's "Resurrection" Symphony, one "sitting" resulted only in a single record side. The immense orchestra and chorus hired for the performance had to be paid, although the chorus was never used—in this particular session—and the orchestra was forced to play and re-play a very small portion of the entire work (which, as veteran collectors know, ran

to twenty-two record sides). And the sale of such a set was inevitably very small.

Of course, such conditions are by no means always the case. If they were, the manufacturers would hastily go out of business, at least as far as making records of serious music was concerned. Musicians with long recording experience oftentimes can turn out an astonishing amount of work in a single sitting. Dr. Blech, for example, is reputed to have made no less than six overtures in a single sitting, and all of them are among his best works. The N. G. S. chamber orchestra, under John Barbirolli, even surpassed this, for after a single morning's rehearsal it was able to turn out seven double-sided records in one sitting, probably an unparalleled feat in recording serious works.

I should not close without some reference to Mr. Levy's admirable letter from Shanghai, China. It is a pleasure to learn the identity of the "Music Lover" whose previous letters have invariably been so rich in interest and value, and to learn something about the splendid work he is doing with phonographic concerts in far-away China.

Surely if such an enthusiast can surmount the handicaps of distance, increased costs, etc., etc., to give the phonograph such doughty support, we in this country, with all our advantages, should spend our time to better advantage than "kicking" about prices, record speeds, and that sort of thing. At present, and for some time to come, what the phonograph needs is support, not carping criticism.

New York City, N. Y.

EDWARD C. HARROLD

PHONOGRAPHIC CITIES

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

Mr. D. E. Levy's brilliant survey of phonographic conditions in Shanghai in the December issue interested me mightily. A survey of this sort, written by an authority, is of very considerable educational value as well as making pleasurable reading. Might I suggest that you print from time to time similar surveys in a series of "Phonographic Cities." Mr. Fukaya who used to write so inimitably on Japanese conditions might contribute "Phonographic Tokio." Mr. Bharucha is well equipped to write on "Phonographic Bombay," Mr. Aleman on "Phonographic Havana," etc. I should be particularly anxious to read a survey of "Phonographic Montevideo" (Uruguay, South America) as I know that there are many collectors of fine recorded music there.

American cities might also be included in the list, and while conditions in London are more or less familiar to most record collectors (through the British magazines), surveys on Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and Rome, and other European centers would surely appeal to and enlighten the majority of the readers of this magazine. Such surveys would be of particular value in connection with the release of leading orchestras of the various cities, for example, the Vienna Philharmonic, now recording for H. M. V.

By the way, has anyone ever answered the inquiry published about a year ago regarding phonographic conditions in Soviet Russia?

L.J.

Akron, Ohio

SOUTH AMERICA AND THE PHONOGRAPH

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

President-elect Hoover's "good will" tour of South America has undoubtedly done much to increase public interest in our sister continent. I have repeatedly seen comments in the magazines regarding the lively enthusiasm for the phonograph shown by South Americans, and I understand that you number many of them among your readers. Victor's celebrated Fabini records played so brilliantly by talented Mr. Shavitch, conductor of our local symphony orchestra, demonstrate that music of no mean order exists among our southern neighbors. That they purchase records in large quantities is proved by the astonishing business the leading American record manufacturers do in South America.

Could you not persuade one of your South American readers to contribute an article or letter on musical and phonographic conditions in his native land? Mr. Levy's letter on Chinese conditions and the letters Mr. Fukaya used to write about Japan are to be listed among the most valuable features of your publication. I, and I am sure there are many others, would be equally appreciative of learning something more about the sort of music and records that is played and enjoyed in the leading South American centers. Syracuse, N. Y.

R.F.B.

OUR FOREIGN CONTEMPORARIES

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

In the November issue of your magazine you mention a German magazine, "Die Phonographische Zeitschrift."

Can you furnish me with the information necessary to enable me to subscribe to this magazine? (Address of publisher, subscription rate, etc.)

Would also greatly appreciate any information you could furnish regarding other phonograph publications in either the English or other languages. Would it be practical to publish a list of them in your magazine?

Los Angeles, Calif.

R. J. B.

Editor's Note: In reply to this and many similar enquiries resulting from our publication of the note Herr Diesing, Editor of "Die Phonographische Zeitschrift," the following list of our principal foreign "exchanges" may be of value:

"Die Phonographische Zeitschrift," (fortnightly), published by Rothgiesser & Diesing, Linienstrasse 139, Berlin N. 24, Germany. Yearly foreign subscription rate, RM. 10.—or the equivalent in American currency.

"Musique et Instruments," (monthly), published by L'Office General de la Musique, 15, Rue de Madrid, Paris 8me, France. Yearly foreign subscription rate, 60 francs.

"The Gramophone," (monthly), published by Gramophone (Publications) Ltd., 58, Frith Street, London W. 1, England. Yearly U. S. A. subscription rate, \$3.50.

"The British Musician," (monthly), 53, Barclay Road, Warley Woods, Birmingham, England. Yearly foreign subscription rate not stated. Single copies are sixpence each in Great Britain.

"Sound Wave," (monthly), 1 & 2, Whitfield Street, Finsbury, London E. C. 2, England. Yearly foreign subscription rate not stated; the yearly British rate is 4 shillings, sixpence.

"Music Trades Review," (monthly), published by G. D. Ernest & Co., 5, Duke Street, Adelphi, London W. C. 2, England. Yearly foreign subscription rate, 12 shillings, sixpence.

"The Gramophone Critic and Society News" (monthly), 1 & 2, Whitfield Street, Finsbury, London E. C. 2, England. Yearly foreign subscription rate not stated; single copies are twopence each in Great Britain.

"Die Tonwiedergabe," (monthly), Löblichgasse 5-7, Vienna IX, Austria. Yearly foreign subscription rate, \$10.—or the equivalent in American currency.

The last two magazines have just begun publication recently. "Die Tonwiedergabe" is a trade magazine dealing particularly with the import and export phonograph trade. It does not review records. "The Gramophone Critic" is an off-shoot of "Sound Wave", and carries many of the same reviews. "Music Trades Review" is a trade magazine which does not review records, but which contains very interesting financial and technical information. The French and German magazines list, but do not review records, and both are of incalculable value to every record collector. "The Gramophone," "The British Musician," and "Sound Wave" all review records and publish general, technical, historical, etc., articles dealing with the phonograph and recorded music.

HARD TO FIND "FINDS"

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

Every music lover collecting the best types of recorded music owes a very great debt of gratitude to the Foreign Departments of the various manufacturing companies. During the past year or so the "foreign" supplements have contained many of the finest and most original contributions to recorded literature. THE PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW in calling attention to these "finds," and such individuals as R. J. B. of Los Angeles who agitate to make them more readily available, also deserve our grateful praise.

Everyone who has gone to great trouble to procure these records from local dealers will agree with R. E. that at least one dealer in each community should carry a complete foreign stock. I, too, find it more expedient to order by mail than to rush around from dealer to dealer endeavoring to get works of which they seem never to have heard. Don't the dealers receive copies of the foreign supplements? And if they do, don't they ever read them? It would seem not!

It seems a musical shame and business inefficiency to have such splendid works available, and yet so nearly unobtainable. Eventually, of course, they will be listed in the domestic



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Brahms: *Symphony No. 4 in E Minor*. Album M-31. (9212-9217.) List price, \$9. LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conducted by HERMANN ABENDROTH.

Wagner: *Die Meistersinger*; Overture. *Götterdämmerung*; Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine. Siegfried's Funeral Music. *Parsifal*; Prelude. Album M-37. (6858-6862.) List price, \$10. BERLIN STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, conducted by KARL MUCK.

Brahms: *Concerto in D Major*, also *Romance in A Major*. (Schumann-Kreisler.) In Album M-36. (8098-8102.) List price, \$12.50. FRITZ KREISLER and the BERLIN STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, conducted by DR. LEO BLECH.

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Schubert: *Quartet No. 6 in D Minor* (Death and the Maiden), also *Quartet in E Flat—Canzonetta* (Mendelssohn). Album M-34. (9241-9245.) List price, \$7.50. BUDAPEST STRING QUARTET.

Schubert: *Symphony No. 7 in C Major*. Album M-33. (9235-9240.) List price, \$9. LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, conducted by DR. LEO BLECH.

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*Phonograph Monthly
Review*

catalogue, but at present it is extremely difficult to trace back releases, except perhaps among the reviews in the magazine. Columbia is to be congratulated on its idea of issuing two "foreign" disks each month in the domestic supplement. Albany, N. Y.

ARTHUR G.

BACK TO BACH

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

R. B. Withers, writing in the November issue of "The Gramophone," presses anew the necessity of adding more Bach works to the recorded repertory. The contrast he points out as existing between the popularity of Bach at the "Proms" and other concerts and his almost complete neglect by the recording companies, is well taken. I seem to remember Emil V. Benedict and others writing in similar vein to the pages of this magazine.

Mr. Withers should congratulate himself, however, that the majority of the few recorded Bach works are of British issue. Here in America, where Bach is no less popular in the concert hall, we have still fewer works to show; Stokowski's wonder-discs holding the field alone. The Philadelphians' set of the Second Brandenburg Concerto is rumored to be available this season; the Third should follow in short order.

England is rapidly augmenting its admirable series of recorded organ works of Bach, but as yet the great Mass and Passions are represented only by excerpts. I should add my voice to that of "A Cappella" and others writing to your columns that the Bethlehem Bach Choir and similar organizations might sometime record. Their absence from the ranks of recording artists is the most serious omission of all, now that Koussevitzky has at last been engaged to record. Lancaster, Penna.

"SEBASTIAN"

WAR-HORSES

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPHIC MONTHLY REVIEW:

The problem of "taste" is one that baffles me. Why should you be disappointed in Dr. Herz's records of Liszt's "Preludes" because they aren't brilliant enough, and be disappointed in Stokowski's "Blue Danube" and "Invitation to the Waltz" because they are too brilliant? Hearing the latter records you counsel moderation and warn conductors against undue virtuosity, but when a fine musician like Dr. Herz avoids virtuosity and plays the "Preludes" in straightforward, musical manner, you find fault with him for not indulging in virtuosity. How is a poor conductor to know what to do?

New York City, N. Y.

J. F. EDWARDS

A WORD OF PRAISE

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPHIC MONTHLY REVIEW:

In response to your notification, I am remitting four dollars for the renewal of the subscription that I take for Mr. ____.

The magazine has been of great help in selecting those records that my friend and I wish to buy. While we do not at all times agree with the analytical notes totally, we nevertheless appreciate the sound musical criticism that we find there. It is not often that one finds a magazine that deals with music, and especially phonograph music, in an intelligent way. It is needless to say, then, that we enjoy your magazine very much and hope to profit by its use.

T. S.

LES PRELUDES AGAIN, AND MENDELBERG

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

I quite agree with your publication's contention that Dr. Herz's performance of Les Preludes is sadly unstimulating, and that the old Victor version by Mengelberg has never been surpassed. I have also the acoustic Polydor records of this work, but they are very weak indeed. Undoubtedly a great many will agree with me that Mengelberg is the only conductor able to record Les Preludes satisfactorily; I can't understand why he did not do so when he was recording with his own Concertgebouw Orchestra. Neither his choice of selections nor his recorded performances (with the Concertgebouw) are quite all that we expect from him. I enjoy the Christian Bach Sinfonia immensely, but is not the finale section missing on the record?

Mengelberg has so conclusively demonstrated his position as one of the top-notch recording conductors that recorded

music is suffering a great loss during his recording absence (I hope it is merely a temporary vacation). His Victory Ball, I think, is one of the most remarkable triumphs of recording, and it is all the more remarkable for having been made during the early days of the electrical process.

There are literally dozens of great works which he does in imitable fashion. First, of course, Les Preludes; then by all means Strauss' Heldenleben, of which he is easily the most effective interpreter. (The fact that it is dedicated to him makes him a still more desirable choice to record it.) The Rosamunde Overture, Tchaikovsky's Fifth or Pathetique Symphonies, Kodaly's amusing Harry Janos Suite, the Dutchman Overture, the Lohengrin Prelude and many other Wagnerian works, Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, Howard Hanson's Pan and the Priest, Weber's Euryanthe Overture (never satisfactorily recorded), Strauss' Don Quixote, . . . the list could be prolonged almost indefinitely.

I am sure that thousands of old and prospective Mengelberg admirers are anxiously awaiting his future releases! When are they to be available?

Garden City, L. I.

D. L. L.

"MUSIC LOVER'S" TRIBUTE TO BRUNSWICK

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

The Music Lover from far off Shanghai has at last an opportunity of expressing his hearty appreciation of the Brunswick Company's latest release of the magnificent Rachmaninoff Album Set as interpreted by Nicolai Sokoloff and The Cleveland Orchestra. This is admittedly a move in the right direction. The Brunswick Company by this single move has risen to its rightful place among the recording Companies of the World. It is now a full fledged member of the family. The recording, the music—in fact the set taken as a whole is not only a remarkable achievement, but I may say without exaggeration that it ranks with the best recorded masterpieces.

Now that Nicolai Sokoloff has shown us his remarkable insight and genius as a conductor and musician, may we not plead for Bloch's "Israel Symphony" for which he is so justly famous? What about expecting a complete version of the "Java Suite" with Godowsky at the piano? May we have that too, please Brunswick? Is there any complete Sonata coming with Hoffman's name on the labels? Let us all ask for "more and more" in the spirit of Oliver Twist. Give the Brunswick Company our unstinted support and no doubt there will be no further occasion to write letters and AGITATE.

Shanghai, China

D. E. LEVY

F. M. IN REBUTTAL

EDITOR, PHONOGRAPH MONTHLY REVIEW:

Little did I dream that my venture into the correspondence Column would bring the comments as set forth in the December issue. Some of the letters require an answer.

The superior K. L. is slightly caustic himself. The remark about an "occasional classic" sets forth admirably these persons' belief that they were the only ones who ever owned a record. No, Mr. K. L. I probably had Coates' "Ring" and many others just about the same time you got yours. As to the Firebird, I used S. K.'s reference as a figure of speech in regard to the "waiter and the dishes" (Kastchei). The thing as a whole, you know just as well as I do, is beautiful. The "Princess and the Golden Apples" and the "Berceuse" are as beautiful examples of imaginative description as any composer of major standing could bring forth from the instruments of an orchestra. But his compositions following the "Firebird" with the exception perhaps of the "Nightingale" leave me cold. Genius or no I never could get used to "Petrouchka" or the "Rites of Spring." So many of the modern composers of today are in the same book. Noise, effects, etc., and beauty left by the way side.

Back again to collectors. Mr. Gerstle in the July 27 issue says the last word. "In the first place I venture to express the opinion that the person who has a collection of several thousand records is primarily a record collector and so secondarily a music lover. The latter must be a man of taste and taste implies discrimination. The wholesale acquisition of records denies this quality. The record collector stands in the same relation to the music lover as the bibliophile does to the book lover." What more can one say? Now for the old timers: What has become of "Gramophile," Mr. Brit-

zius, Mr. Oman, Mr. Gerstle, Mr. Brainerd, Mr. Biewend, Mr. Volkmann and Mr. K. Robdon who all used to contribute most informative and interesting information in these columns.

Mr. Robdon's letters were gems. Let's hear more from them. I almost forgot K. L. and his "New World" paragraph in this respect. To Mr. Benedict I owe an abject apology. I must admit that his lectures on "price" wearied me a trifle, but his straightforward reply leaves me without much to stand on. What I meant to say by "twice as much" is that I would gladly do so for certain records were they only obtainable at that price. To sum it up we get many times our money's worth in most of the major recordings of today. In answer to No. 1 in your December queries about Brunswick records, the dealers I sounded out in regard to their price reductions were all of the same opinion. At former top prices Brunswick Records didn't sell, in comparison to Victor and Columbia (Masterworks). They had to do something. No. 2. Shorter works by Columbia at a dollar, Album works at \$1.50. I suppose it costs more to bring out, say a Schubert Symphony, than it does to record a single disk of the Marche Militaire. More rehearsal, more work, album, etc. would necessarily cost a little more. Whether it's 50 cents I don't know. Point 3 probably is a matter of contract. Further than that you win. Strange that Sokoloff is creating such a furor in the recording world. He has been giving us great music for the past five years in Cleveland. F. M. did not rush back and pay a double price for the Rachmaninoff set. My previous statement explains why. But now Mr. Benedict I want to ask you a question. Do you think a wholesale reduction in price in Victor, Columbia and Brunswick would be advantageous. Wouldn't we be worse off then ever before? Think it over. The real enthusiast would spend so much he'd probably get a divorce or begrudge a pair of shoes. As things are at present, we can buy only so much, the wise man sets a limit, and temptations or not he knows how far to go.

Mr. Benedict's opening paragraph made me distinctly angry with myself and I retract the term "high priest of kickers." Cleveland, Ohio

F. M.

Phonographic Echoes

PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY OBSERVES SCHUBERT CENTENNIAL

The Centenary of the death of the Viennese Composer Franz Peter Schubert was observed at a meeting held under the auspices of the Russian Literary Society of Philadelphia at their rooms 4062 Parkside Avenue, on Sunday, November 25th. Fifty or more people attended.

The meeting was presided over by Mr. Jacques Resnikoff. Following the opening remarks, a paper on the life and work of Schubert, was read by Mr. William E. Smith. Mr. Smith gave a biographical sketch and pointed out various things in Schubert's life that are of interest to us today. He emphasized the fact that the most profitable manner of honoring the composer lay in a broader knowledge of the compositions of this master, especially of the chamber music, which he stated was in the first rank of compositions in this form. He urged that Schubert be not merely a name for us; that through his music the composer should become part of our experience and life.

Following the reading of Mr. Smith's paper there was a musical program. For this, a Columbia Kolster Electric Viva-tonal Phonograph and Columbia's recordings of some of Schubert's works were used. These were provided by the Philadelphia Branch of the Columbia Phonograph Company. As is known, the Columbia people have again taken the lead in commemorating the centenary of a great figure in music, and music lovers I feel sure are appreciative of what this company has done—last year at the time of the Beethoven Centenary; this year, the Schubert.

The compositions played represented Schubert as a symphonist, as a composer in the chamber music form, and as a composer of songs.

The numbers used were:

SYMPHONY IN C—7 records
FOUR SONGS—Death and the Maiden, The Erlking, The Wanderer, The Phantom
Double—2 records
QUINTET IN C—for 2 violins, 2 'celi, and
viola—6 records

The recordings of these works are truly remarkable and offer conclusive proof that the phonograph is playing a great part in musical education, thereby increasing knowledge and appreciation of some of the finest things in music.

The affair began at 8.30 P.M. and lasted until close to midnight. The musical portion of the program lasted well over two hours and it is not only a tribute to Schubert's works but to the fine reproduction of these compositions, that the audience remained throughout.

Mr. Smith will deliver a series of lectures through the winter on various composers and their works and will use records to illustrate his talks. He has been assured of the

co-operation of the local office of the Columbia Company in this series.

It is hoped that this practical example of what small groups can do in commemorating the Schubert Centenary, by lectures and use of the phonograph will inspire others to undertake like ventures.

WEEKLY RECORD RELEASE BY COLUMBIA

The Columbia Phonograph Company will issue the first of its weekly record releases on January 4, 1929, and continue to do so on each succeeding Friday.

Fourteen records make up the weekly release as follows: five dance and popular vocal, three celebrity and standard instrumental, one novelty, three familiar tunes, and two race.

A weekly hanger in color will be issued in conjunction with each release. This will list the dance, popular vocals, celebrity, standard and novelty records.

Care of Records

1. OPERATING PRECAUTIONS—The sound box or the electric pickup should never be dropped onto the record when starting to play. Injury to the record as well as the sound box or pickup will result if this point is not observed. Always lower the sound box or pickup gently onto the smooth outer rim of the record, and then push the needle into the first record groove. Care must be observed when placing the sound box or pickup on the record or when removing it from the record that the needle point is not accidentally moved across the record surface, scratching the record grooves.

Records which have become badly scratched or cracked should be destroyed. Injury to the sound box or pickup may otherwise result.

2. CHANGING NEEDLES—Record life is largely dependent upon the proper use of needles. To assure best tone quality and maximum record life, steel needles should be changed after each record. The steel needle has a tapered point which wears down during playing. As this point wears, it tends to crowd the record grooves, causing poor reproduction of music and excessive wear on the record.

3. CLEANING RECORDS—Records should be kept as free from dust as possible. Gritty dust wears the record rapidly, and also causes poor reproduction. Before playing, it is advisable to brush the records. A piece of velvet or plush glued to a wooden block forms an excellent record brush. Soap and water or any other cleaning compound should not be used.

4. WARPED RECORDS—Warping of records presents one of the most common causes for faulty reproduction. Warping affects the pitch of the music, particularly on long sustained notes, and on the automatic instruments warped records often prevent the mechanism from changing records properly. Warping can readily be avoided if the instructions below on record storage are carefully observed. Records which have become warped can usually be flattened by placing them on a flat solid surface in a warm room, and weighting them with other records or with books.

5. RECORD STORAGE AND PREVENTION OF WARPING—Records should be kept in the envelopes in which they are received or in record albums. When placed in the envelopes, the records should be stored on a flat surface, and should be assorted according to sizes. When placed in the albums the latter should preferably be full to prevent any tendency to bend the records. To prevent warping, it is desirable that the albums be placed in a vertical position whenever possible. When records are removed from the albums, they should always be placed on a flat surface, and should never be placed in the direct sunlight or near a radiator.

6. EXCESSIVE RECORD WEAR—Failure to change needles, as stated above, is a frequent cause of excessive record wear.

An improperly adjusted tone arm or sound box crook will cause excessive record wear, excessive scratch, and faulty reproduction.

A defective sound box or electric pickup will cause excessive record wear.

7. CLEANING TURNTABLE—The turntable should be removed occasionally and cleaned with a stiff brush. This will remove any dust from the turntable surface, and thus prevent any gritty particles from coming into contact with the record.

Prague Teachers' Chorus

By Dr. JAR. E. S. VOJAN

On January 5, 1929 the first American Tour of the Prague Teachers' Chorus will begin in Boston.

Ten years ago an unusual Music Festival was held in London. It proved of more than ordinary interest to the British people. The Czecho-Slovaks, by whose heroic exploits in Siberia, a modern *Anabasis*, the world was thrilled in the last year of the World War, and who have definitely regained their liberty as a result of the Allies' victory, conceived an admirable idea of how to discharge a debt of gratitude and to pay a tribute of respect to Great Britain for the generous help which she had extended to them in their struggle for deliverance from the Hapsburg yoke. They sent their best musical representatives to London: the Prague Teachers' Chorus, the Moravian Teachers' Chorus, Mme. Ema Destinn, the violin virtuoso Jaroslav Kocian, the Bohemian String Quartet and the orchestra of the National Theatre of Prague with its great conductor, the late Karel Kovarovic. The Festival, held at the Queen's Hall and Wigmore Hall May 26-29, 1919, met with a splendid success.

After the first concert "The Times" wrote: "The singing of the two male-voiced choirs of 50 voices each was an event which took away the breath. The whole aim of Czecho-Slovak singing is a distinct tradition from anything in Western Europe. It must be heard by all who are interested in choral singing." And "The Daily Telegraph" remarked: "The singing of the Teachers' choruses is quite wonderful in its dynamic variety and its rhythmic swing. Indeed, the dynamic variety is so emphatic and so extensive that all shades seem, nay are, possible from the most dulcet *ppp* to an almost savage *fff*. The technical difficulties do not exist for our Czecho-Slovak friends."

The history of the Prague Teachers' Chorus which was invited to America by a committee of prominent Americans of Bohemian descent is very interesting.

When in the first five decades of the 19th century the Bohemian (Czech) nation slowly, but unswervingly came to life again, the song was a momentous coefficient of this national revival. Under the reactionary regime of Prince Metternich who ruled in Austria instead of the weak emperors the citizens were not permitted to speak in any freer manner, and therefore the nation sang. In those days the Bohemian anthem "Where is my home" was born and many other songs still today cherished by the Czechs. The style of the choral singing was, of course, of the "Liedertafel" type. A great change occurred after the year of 1860. Austria after her defeats on Italian battlefields had to give up the oppressive absolutism, and with the first breaths of the constitutional life the Bohemians began to strive for higher art. Bedrich Smetana appears at the head of the movement. The choral singing also advanced. The first singing society with keener aims, the "Hlahol", was founded in Prague, November 1860, and Smetana wrote his fine choral works "Rolnicka" (The Farmer Song), "Pisen na mori" (The Song at Sea), etc. Gradually the Bohemian composers wrote more and more difficult compositions, and finally Foerster, Novak, Kunc, Janacek, Jeremias, Kricka, etc., dared to write choral works which required the variety and the responsiveness of a symphony orchestra. For such works new choral bodies were a vital necessity. Only a marvelous enthusiasm could carry it into effect, and that is what happened first in Moravia, then in Bohemia.

In 1903 the Moravian Teachers' Chorus was founded and five years later the Prague Teachers' Chorus, probably the most remarkable singing organizations in the world.

After eighteen months of hard work the Prague Teachers' Chorus presented itself to the public for the first time, at the concert of the Bohemian Newspapermen's Society, January 4, 1910. After two years the Prague Teachers took by storm the two most prominent centers of musical culture in Germany, Leipzig and Berlin, Dec. 28 and 29, 1911. Carl Kaempfe wrote in those days: "We heard things which seemed

impossible,—all experts were enraptured by this marvellous virtuosity." In 1912 the Grand Prix, the 10,000 fr. prize of the President of the French Republic, a splendid Limoges vase, a golden wreath (special prize for *prima vista* singing without preparation) and an honorable plaquette of the Paris City Council were the trophies brought back to Prague from the "Concours International de Musique", May 26-28, 1912. Saint-Saens was the chairman of the jury. They sang privately for Debussy who, having inspected some of the tremendously difficult scores which they sang, is credited with the exclamation: "Music for devils to sing, not for human voices!" Today those scores are among the easier of the repertoire of the Prague Teachers' Chorus. In 1913 the society visited Belgium, for 1914 a Russian tour was planned, but the World War prevented its realization. During the war two members died on the front, one member returned as first lieutenant of the Czecho-Slovak legions from Siberia but not until 1919. During the last decade the chorus sang again in London, Paris, further in Italy, Scandinavia, Jugoslavia, Roumania, etc.,—and now comes the American tour,—Boston, New York, Washington, D. C., Yale and Harvard Universities, Montreal, Toronto, Buffalo, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, Wis. University of Michigan, Cleveland, Pittsburg, Dayton, St. Louis, Davenport, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Omaha, St. Joseph and Kansas City, Mo., Dallas, San Antonio, Houston, Havana, etc. The managers of the tour are Mr. M. H. Hanson and Mr. Richard Copley.

The key to the secret of the Prague Teachers' wonderful success is their enthusiasm. Teaching in normal schools in Prague and suburbs they come twice a week to rehearsals, often in bad weather, but nothing can deter them. Severe illness is the only excuse. Even if a member is indisposed and cannot sing, he does not miss the rehearsal in order to hear the comments and explanations of the leaders or of the conductor. They toil only for the love of the thing, not for salary. The proceeds of concerts go to the treasury from which the traveling and other expenses are paid. To become a member of the chorus requires the passing of a rigid examination, to remain a member means to pass a new examination every year. This system of the "survival of the fittest" guarantees the freshness of voices. Most of the applicants have more or less a musical education, but several experts in singing are employed by the society to teach the newcomers how to sing. Every member must learn his part at home as to intonation and singing without notes. Then every voice studies its part separately, with the leader. After this preparation all four voices sing together, but first in five groups, ten singers each. Every group has its own leader. Only when a perfect unity has been attained, do all 50 singers begin to rehearse under the vice-conductor. The conductor (first was prof. Fr. Spilka, second—since 1921—prof. Metod Dolezil) attends these rehearsals. When the vice-conductor is satisfied with the results, that is when the intonation and sound unity as well as the certainty of every individual is perfect, when all difficulties have been mastered with consummate ease, the conductor assumes the final artistic polishing of the work. He infuses the reproduction of the composition with his soul, and in this way the great miracle is accomplished which reflects in the following words of the critic of the London "Observer": "The technique of the chorus is amazing. It would take the best of our choirs a year's rehearsal to do some of the things these people did with the swiftness and the accuracy of machine-gun firing. There was never the slightest hesitation, the slightest fumbling, in the execution of some of the most difficult feats possible in choral singing. In the slower emotional style our best choirs could match them for beauty of tone, accuracy of chording, and depth and variety of poetic expression. Where the Czechoslovaks most astonished us was in the dramatic intensity of their singing, and in their certainty of their ensemble in passages that had the speed and the changefulness, the curtnesses, the interruptions, of excited speech rather than of choral music as we understand it over here. They were full, too, of the cutest musical dodges—giving their choral texture something of the variable tinting of orchestral tone, indulging (much in the style of the brass) in sudden stresses and relaxations of tone upon a single note, and so on. And all of it was done without the faintest suspicion of trick-doing for the mere trick's sake."

The Prague Teachers' Chorus has appeared in 600 concerts during the two decades. Their fellow-countrymen here in

the United States hope that the American tour will be a striking success. They rest their hopes on the impressions which these singers made upon American connoisseurs abroad. Mr. Downes, musical editor of "New York Times", wrote for instance on June 11, 1928: "I can only say, after having the privilege of hearing this remarkable chorus of the Teachers of Prague, that it has been one of the most inspiring musical experiences I have had, not only because of the splendid technical qualities of the chorus, but because, above all, of the high intelligence, deep sincerity and profound feeling which characterized all the singing." The same impression was also had by Walter Damrosch who accepted the chairmanship of the National Committee for the tour.

The H.M.V. records made in London in the fall of 1926 are published by the Victor Company, some of them are as follows:

79182—two anthems of the Czechoslovak Republic, the Czech anthem, "Kde domov muj" (Where is my home, music by Skroup) and the Slovak anthem "Nad Tatrou sa blyksa" (It lightens over Tatra Mountains), and Bedrich Smetana

"Veno" (Dedication, the beginning of the text: "Let us dedicate the gift of singing to the fatherland").

79432—J. B. Foerster "Polni cestou" (On the field path,—the simple, but very delicate poem by Sladek sings of a young dead girl whose body is carried through the fields to the cemetery, note the bell effect of bass voices in the last bars of the composition),—and two shorter songs, J. Jindrich "I have no joy in Klönci" and R. Wuensch "Farewell Song".

68866—J. Kricka "Vysoko zornicka" (The Evening Star) and Vitezslav Novak "Vanoční ukolebavka" (Christmas Cradle Song).

80497—J. B. Foerster "Když jsme se loučili" (When we parted) and Karel Bendl "Svoji k svemu" (Let each adhere to his brethren).

81605—Zdenek Fibich "Ticha noc" (Silent night) and Jar. Kricka "Teece voda" (The water flows, with tenor solo sung by Stan. Smid,—this Moravian Slovak folk song is a favorite song of President Masaryk who was born in the Slovak part of Moravia).

Analytical Notes and Reviews

By OUR STAFF CRITICS

Orchestral

Victor 6882-4 (3 D12s, \$2.00 each) **Strawinski: Orchestral Suite from the Ballet, "Petrouchka,"** five parts), and **Apollon Musagete—Excerpt from Scene II** (one part), played by **Serge Koussevitzky** and the **Boston Symphony Orchestra.**

Ample comment has been made elsewhere in this issue on the general significance of this first recording from the baton of Koussevitzky, and the first electrical recording of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The present review need consider only the music and the recorded performance.

The recording, made in the orchestra's own Symphony Hall, catches one's first attention with its extraordinary clarity. Tutti chords of the strings, or the full orchestra, have a pure resonance and color, undistorted by over-amplification, that is remarkable on records. Indeed, the purity of the recording, even when reproduced on an electrical amplifying instrument, is the feature which to musicians will probably outweigh even the more sensational merits of sonority and volume of tone. But the highest virtue of the recording is that it does not focus and hold attention on itself alone, rather it leads one's attention irresistibly to the orchestra, just as the orchestra's remarkable virtuoso and sharply outlined performance leads one on to the music itself.

It is difficult for one who hears the Boston Symphony regularly to examine the orchestral playing critically. This example of its work is characteristic and authentic. It cannot be confused with that of any other orchestra. Those who believe this orchestra one of the finest instruments in the world, of a color and flexibility that make even the most brilliant feats of other virtuoso orchestras seem machine-like and inhuman, will find additional evidence for their belief in these disks. Listening carefully to the strings in either the energetic, nervous passages of Petrouchka, or the silken melodic lines and grave, delicate sonorities of the Apollo excerpt; to the wood wind in the section "Chez Petrouchka" (part 2); to the brass, particularly in the Masqueraders section (parts), one cannot fail to note many of the virtues peculiar to the Boston Symphony alone.

Koussevitzky's reading of this work is without question incomparable. There are other conductors who can rival him in the Firebird Suite and Le Sacre, but in Petrouchka Koussevitzky excels. His is not a ballet performance, it is primarily a concert performance, draining the last drops of brilliance from this glittering, sparkling score. Yet it should not be thought that the effects sought—and achieved—are merely the sensational ones; there is no need to read that Koussevitzky took infinite pains with the details of

this performance,—the records themselves are obvious evidence of the fact. The most infinitesimal nuance, the slightest accent do not escape his attention and care.

The music was referred to briefly in a "re-review" of the old Goossens set, March, 1926, page 276. To many it is Strawinski's finest achievement, his most genuine claim to enduring fame. It is both characteristically Russian—infused with the purest essence of folk music and folk lore—and universal. Although the story of the ballet helps one to taste to the full the flavor of the music, especially for any one unversed in the modern idiom, the music itself exists independently of the ballet. As Paul Rosenfeld says. "The angular, wooden gestures of the dolls, their smudged faces, their entrails of sawdust are in the music ten times as intensely as they are upon the stage. In the score of Petrouchka, music itself has become a little manikin in parti-colored clothes, at which Strawinski gazes and laughs as a child laughs at a funny doll, and makes dance and tosses in the air, and sends sprawling."

"Petrouchka" was first produced in Paris by the Russian Ballet, June 13, 1911, Pierre Monteux, conductor. The story of the ballet can be found in detail in Montagu-Nathan's "Contemporary Russian Composers." The version recorded acoustically by Eugene Goossens some years ago for H. M. V. and Victor was the complete ballet score. The present version is the "orchestral suite from the ballet", authorized by the composer, and usually played in concert. (Sometimes some introductory measures are played, Lento; the old Charletan's flute brings his puppets to life. The version played here begins immediately with the Russian Dance.) It omits the opening of the ballet with its delineation of the crowd at the fair, the organ grinder, the bustle and excitement; part III, the scene in the Moor's apartment and the quaint dance of the Ballerina; the end of the ballet with the death of Petrouchka and the appearance of his ghost. Recorded literature will have room for a complete recording of the ballet score, but one's imagination is hard put to conceive of any other performance—on records or in the concert hall—that will approach even within striking distance of this superb version of Koussevitzky.

"Apollon Musagète" ("Apollo, Leader of the Muses"), scored for strings alone, is Strawinski's most recent work; it was first played in Washington, April 27, 1928, at Elizabeth Coolidge's Chamber Music Festival in the Library of Congress. The excerpt recorded here is from the second scene: Apollo et Terpsichore. In style it represents the utmost in simplicity and lucidity. As Cocteau says, "It will mystify neither the sophisticated artist nor—the child." One might add that it cannot fail deeply to move either of them. It reveals a new side of Strawinski, and new tenderness and beauty. In it Koussevitzky is an interpreter of

no less penetration of insight than in the brighter, sharper moods of *Petrouchka*. Together, excerpt and ballet make an addition to the recorded repertory of greater delectability of interest, musical significance, and promise for the future of the phonograph, than any other release of the year.

Columbia 50102-D (D12, \$1.00) **Strauss: Die Fledermaus—Selection**, played by Johann **Strauss** and a symphony orchestra.

The son of the Waltz King is at his best in this disk, and his orchestra, too, is heard to better advantage than in some of the previous releases in this series. A competent performance, well recorded.

Columbia 50104-6-D (3 D12s, \$1.00 each) **Tchaikowsky: Casse Noisette Suite**, played by **Percy Pitt** and the **British Broadcasting Company's Wireless Symphony Orchestra**.

Percy Pitt and his sonorously named orchestra rush in where other and vastly more able musicians have feared to tread—on the heels of Stokowski and the Philadelphians. Little comment and less praise can be given to either performance or recording. That this set is remarkably inexpensive is its outstanding *raison d'être*.

Brunswick 50149 (D12, \$1.00) **Halvorsen: Entrance of the Boyars**, and **Sibelius: Valse Triste**, Op. 44, played by **Nikolai Sokoloff** and the **Cleveland Symphony Orchestra**.

This attractive coupling of deservedly favorite concert pieces is in every way up to the standard set by the previous releases of the Cleveland Orchestra's current series. Indeed, in the respect of greater extent of the dynamic range it is somewhat superior. Again the recording is remarkably translucent and limpid, admirably fitted for reproduction on electrical instruments. Sokoloff's reading of Halvorsen's fanciful and exuberant march-piece is surprisingly effective. I say surprisingly because I had hardly expected that he would play it with so much verve and intensity. The dynamic range from a real piano to a full fortissimo is perhaps the feature of the brilliant recording. The *Valse Triste* is done more satisfactorily than in any other recorded version I have heard to date. Sokoloff is careful not to drag the pace, and he works up to the climactic point with surety and ease. The strings again cover themselves with glory. A disk which gives one considerably more than one's money's worth.

Odeon 5155 (D12, \$1.50) **Brahms: Hungarian Dances Nos. 5 and 6**, and **Dvorak: Slavonic Dance No. 10**, played by **Dr. Weissmann** and the **Grand Symphony Orchestra** of Berlin.

Dr. Weissmann must have been in an extremely perverse mood when he recorded this disk. His readings are marked by a capriciousness and lack of poise very rarely met with in recorded music. The orchestral performances also are mediocre. It is unfortunate, because these charming dances deserve far better treatment.

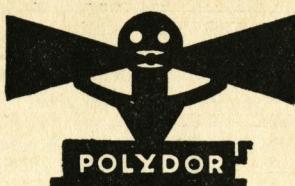
Columbia Masterworks Set No. 99 (3 D12s, Alb., \$4.50) **Liszt: Concerto No. 2, in A major**, for pianoforte and orchestra, played by **Prof. Josef Pembaur**, accompanied by an orchestra under the direction of **Dr. Weissmann**.

This is the same work issued under the Odeon label and reviewed on page 28 of the October, 1928, issue. The Columbia Company is wise in adding it to the Masterworks Series, for it is an excellent example of competent recording of that difficult combination, piano and orchestra. The work aroused a great deal of interest abroad, in fact more than the actual musical significance of the composition would seem to warrant.

Of the two Liszt piano concertos, the one in A minor has been previously available only in a little known abbreviated acoustical version by Anderson Tyner for Edison-Bell. The one in E flat (No. 1) is now issued electrically by Polydor with Alexander Brailowsky as soloist; the acoustical sets were by de Greef for H. M. V. and by Tyner for Edison-Bell.

French Columbia D-11005 (D12) **Lalo: Rapsodie Norvégienne**, played by **Pierre Chagnon** and **Symphony Orchestra**. (Imported through the **H. Royer Smith Company**, Philadelphia.)

Lalo's rhapsody does not strike one as startlingly Norwegian in character, but it is an effective and refreshingly unfamiliar concert piece that deserves to be better known in the American concert halls. To programs of a semi-popular nature it would be a distinctive addition. Chagnon's performance is zestful, full of vitality and snap. Another new conductor to be watched.



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DEBUSSY

Preludes: "Minstrels" from the First Book and "Ondine" from the Second Book. Played by Eduard Erdmann. One 10-inch record. Price \$1.25.

DE FALLA

La Vida Breve: Interlude and Dance. Played by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Berlin, under the direction of Albert Wolf, Opera-Comique, Paris. One 12-inch disc. Price \$1.50.

HAYDN

Quartet in G Minor, ("Horseman"), Opus 74, No. 3. Played by the Buxbaum String Quartet. Four movements on three 12-inch discs. Price \$1.50 each.

HONEGGER

Le Cahier Romand. 5 pieces pour piano. Played by Franz Josef Hirt. One 10-inch record. Price \$1.25.

KRENEK

Jonny Spielt Auf (Jonny Strikes Up). Jonny's Triumphant Song and Blues. Played by Paul Romby and His Band. One 12 inch disc. Price \$1.50.

PUCCINI

Turandot: In questa reggia. One side and *Turandot: Del primo pianta*. Both sung by Anne Rose, soprano of the State Opera, Dresden. One 12-inch disc. Price \$1.50.

TIESSEN

Ein Sperling in die Hand des Eduard Erdmann (piano). One side and *Blackbird*, Opus 31, No. 2. Both played by Eduard Erdmann. One 12-inch disc. Price \$1.50.

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"THE WORLD'S RECORD SHOP"

Odeon 5156 (D12, \$1.50) **Offenbach: Entr'acte and Minuet**, and **Barcarolle**, played by **Dr. Weissmann** and the **Grand Symphony Orchestra** of Berlin.

This is a re-recording of one of Dr. Weissmann's most noted disks. Both performance and recording are rather coarse. A work appealing to those interesting in the selections rather than those in the quality of the playing.

French Columbia D-11016 (D12) **Erik Satie: Trois petites pieces montees**, and **Massenet: Scenes Alsaciennes—Sous les tilleuls**, played by **Pierre Chagnon and Symphony Orchestra**. (Imported through the **H. Royer Smith Company**, Philadelphia.)

Are these perhaps the first orchestral works of Satie to be recorded? They should pave the way for the brief Gymnopédies orchestrated by Debussy. Chagnon's performance of these three tiny pieces is appropriately piquant and incisive. The lively trumpet passages in the second, and a realistically recorded passage of the double bassoon in its lowest range call for special comment. Massenet's soulful music on the other side (a quaint choice for a coupling) is given with its due sentiment.

Odeon 5154 (D12, \$1.50) **Flotow: Martha—Overture**, played by **Dr. Weissmann** and the **Grand Symphony Orchestra** of Berlin.

Here we have Dr. Weissmann recognizably himself. The performance is vivid, dramatic one in characteristic Teutonic fashion. A comparison of this reading with the more direct and forceful American one of Bourdon makes a fascinating and musically valuable study. Both recorded performances are good; a choice between them depends on one's personal tastes. For most Americans, of course, the Bourdon disk is likely to be slightly preferred.

Victor 1356 (D10, \$1.50) **Bizet: Carmen—Prelude to Act I, and Habanera** (Act IV);

Victor 6873 (D12, \$2.00) **Carmen—Gypsy Dance** (Act II), **Intermezzo to Act III** and **Les Dragons d'Alcala**;

Victor 6874 (D12, \$2.00) **Carmen—March of the Smugglers** (Act III), and **Soldiers Changing the Guard** (Act I);

Played by **Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra**.

Stokowski had several Carmen selections in his old acoustical list; this suite replaces them and throws in a few new pieces for good measure. Little of the conductor's personality is revealed in these records: they are simply a first rate reading of Bizet's glowing music by a most superior orchestra. The recording is excellent, and the orchestral performances of course irreproachable. If one likes the music—and who does not?—one need not wait for a better version to come out, for it is almost incredible that one ever will. The prelude to Act I is perhaps a shade below the other excerpts in the set; I prefer Wolff's high-spirited Polydor recording. But the rest are unqualifiedly fine, led perhaps by the silken, sinuous performance of the Gypsy Dance. It is not difficult to prophesy that these disks will fulfill a notable mission in attracting the "man in the street" to the splendors of orchestral music. Fortunately, they do so in much more artistic fashion than the celebrated Stokowski Blue Danube Waltz, whose appeal was more sensational and I think actually less effective. No one, musician or musical illiterate can resist the charm of these records.

Victor Musical Masterpiece Set M-40 (5 D12s, Alb., \$10.00) **Program** by the **Hollywood Bowl Orchestra** ("Symphonies Under the Stars") conducted by **Eugene Goossens**.

(6868) **Dvorak: Carneval Overture**

(6869) **de Falla: Fire Dance**, and **Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony—March to the Scaffold** (fourth movement)

(6870) **Balakirew: Islamey**

(6871) **Tchaikowsky: The Sleeping Beauty** (Ballet Suite), Op. 66a 1)—**La fee des lilas, Adagio, and Pas d'Action**

(6872) **The Sleeping Beauty—Pas de caractere, Panorama, and Valse**.

This album is one of the most astounding feats of modern recordings: a program of brilliant concert pieces recorded out of doors in the Hollywood Bowl itself. A single hearing of these disks is irrefutable testimony that California's dithyrambic praises for the acoustical properties of its celebrated Bowl are by no means exaggerated. There is no echo, the sense of spaciousness is not unduly evident; in fact, without knowing the truth one would have no

hesitation in believing these to be studio recordings—and remarkably successful ones.

It is a pleasure to have Goossens back on records again; it has been some time since he has been heard from in any significant compositions. He has a good orchestra (made up largely of Los Angeles Philharmonic and San Francisco Symphony men, I presume), and the performances are full of spirit and color. There is an infectious exuberance to the playing, as if conductor and men were enjoying the pieces themselves. The auditor can hardly fail to enjoy them likewise.

For some reason the Berlioz fails to "come off" very well. It starts promisingly, but the orchestra seems to lack sonority; Weingartner's feather remains still in his hat! The Fire Dance (Danse rituelle du feu) from de Falla's El amor brujo is another story, and Goossens' vibrant and powerful reading compares not unfavorably with the highly praised one of Coppola for French H. M. V.

This is the first recording of the orchestral version of Islamey. (A record of the original piano version is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.) Isn't this Casella's orchestration, the one generally played in concert? No indication is given on the label. It is a dazzling bravura piece, the one by which Balakirew, virtually the founder of the Russian "Five", is best known. Goossens tosses it off with appropriate fieriness and éclat.

His performance of the Carneval Overture is scarcely less brilliant. Some of our staff thin' it easily the finest recording version, but I remain unconvinced that Hamilton Harty's lusty recording is surpassed. As a piece of orchestral playing and recording honors are about even, but to my mind Harty's inimitable gusto, his humor and bravado reveal more clearly the essential Dvorak.

With the Sleeping Beauty ballet suite one can find no fault. Tchaikowsky had an undeniable flair for light, iridescent, "picture" music, of the sort he wrote here and in the Nutcracker Ballet. Goossens' performance strikes exactly the right note; it well may be a definitive version.

A stimulating program of strong "pictorial" appeal, epoch-making recording, and invigorating performances: what stronger combination could one ask? Victor is going about the business of educating the mass of record buyers up to the orchestral level in adroit and commendable fashion. These records will attract the musical illiterate, their hearing will do him a world of musical good, and at the same time they are fully worthy the attention and study of the experienced music lover.

Victor (Educational list No. 5) 21748-9 (2 D10s, 75c each) **Semtana: The Moldau**, played by **Rosario Bourdon** and the **Victor Orchestra**.

The Moldau (Vltava) is the second in a cycle of six symphonic poems called "My Country" (Ma Vlast) and celebrating the history and glories of his native Bohemia. In this recorded version, the labels designate the various sections: Source of the Moldau River, Hunt in the Forest, Peasant Wedding, Moonlight, Dance of the Nymphs, St. John Rapids, Grandeur—Widest Part, Castle Vyschradu; an excellent idea considering the educational purpose of the disks, but one which should not lead one to mistake the work for a suite. The different sections are not separate, but bound in masterly fashion into the poem as a homogeneous whole.

The Victor Educational Department deserves more than a word of praise for making this splendid work available. It is one of the ideal pieces in symphonic literature for appreciative and educational study. It is blithe, melodic, interest-compelling, and artistically satisfying from beginning to end. And withal a piece of prime orchestral writing.

Bourdon's conception of the work is the sound, effective one we expect from him. I wish he had been given a larger orchestra; one cannot quarrel with the actual performance, but the sonority, the amplitude of tone, leaves one with a sense of insufficiency. In other respects the records are quite satisfactory. They should win a place not only in educational work but in private libraries as well.

Victor (Educational list No. 5) 21750 (D10, 75c) **Dett: Juba Dance**, and **Gardner: From the Canebrake**, played by **Rosario Bourdon** and the **Victor Orchestra**.

The Juba Dance is familiar as a piano solo, popularized largely by Percy Grainger; its composer, Nathaniel Dett,

is a Negro musician of more than average talent. Besides the suite *From the Bottoms*, from which this dance is an excerpt, he is well-known for his arrangements of spirituals and for his work as choir director. Gardner's *From the Canebrake* is a popular violin piece. The orchestrators are not named for either work; they deserve mention for their ingenious and effective versions. Both compositions are in semi-Negro idiom, although Gardner himself is white; they are authentic, if slight, examples of American music of the rag-time (not jazz) type.

Bourdon plays them with verve; performance and recording are excellent. The dance is taken a little slower than customary in concert, but both pieces "come off" much better here than in their original solo versions. In fact, they make a delightful coupling, and a little disk that is a notable addition to recorded American music and to the Victor Educational list.

Columbia 67467-8-D (2 D12s, \$1.50 each) **Wagner: Die Meistersinger—Prelude to Act I** (three parts) and **Lohengrin—Prelude to Act III** (one part), played by **Arthur Bodanzky** and the **Grand Symphony Orchestra** of Berlin.

This is the first example to be released in America of the Bodanzky Wagnerian series which is setting European gramophiles by the ears. The fame of these records has preceded them to these shores, but their materialization reveals their merits to have been nowise exaggerated. As Mr Gerstl wrote in the Correspondence Column recently, Bodanzky's *Meistersinger* prelude is "far superior to the Blech, Stock, and Coates records." Mr. Gerstl had not heard the Muck version when he wrote, but despite the many virtues of Muck's reading, the greater amplitude and sonority of the Bodanzky version, its impressive performance and startlingly impressive recording will probably give it the call over Muck's for most people.

Without forgetting the healthy poise and sanity of Muck's version and the exquisite clarity of its melodic parts, Bodanzky's literally stupendous tonal breadths supply the very element which was lacking in the other disks and without which any performance of the prelude leaves one with a sense of unsatisfaction that its tremendous possibilities have not been fully exploited.

Bodanzky apparently has an orchestra of gargantuan size. The recording is hard put to it at times to handle the flood of tone, but it succeeds surprisingly well. The *Lohengrin* prelude is taken at a furious pace, and the odd phrasing in the middle section gives the music a curiously hiccoughy effect, but again the orchestral performance and recording sweep one off one's feet. This is easily the best recorded version.

Bodanzky is sure to play an important role in future orchestral releases. The Metropolitan Opera House suffered no small loss when he left New York. These two disks should be soon followed by the others in his series. (Special reference is made to these disks and their talented recorded, Mr. Charles L. Hibbard, in a very interesting passage in the Editor's General Review in this issue.)

Columbia 67480-D (D12, \$1.50) **Saint Saens: Le Rouet d'Omphale**, played by **Philippe Gaubert** and the **Paris Conservatory Orchestra**.

Reviewed in the September issue from the French pressing: Gaubert sets, and keeps Saint-Saens' Spinning Wheel whirling most satisfactorily . . . one wishes only that such competent and spirited played were employed in a better cause.

English Columbia L-2122-5 (4 D12s Alb.) **Schubert: Rosamunde Music—Overture (Alphonso and Estrella); Entr'actes 1, 2, and 3; Shepherd's Melody; Ballet Music Nos. 1 and 2**; played by **Sir Hamilton Harty** and the **Halle Orchestra**. (Imported through **The Gramophone Shop**, New York City, price with album. \$8.00)

The entire album is on the order of Harty's previous release of the *Rosamunde* (Magic Harp) overture. The recording is of the vibrant, open quality of the previous Manchester Free Trade Hall series, and the performance is what one expects of the Halle Orchestra at its best. Again the Hallé winds and especially the oboe pick one's fancy with their inimitable color, fresh, buoyant, with just the right touch of sting. It is unfortunate that this album was not made available in this country for Schubert week; however, it is promised for early release under the American labels.

The *Alphonso and Estrella* overture is new to records and welcome to them. It is Schubert in jovial, yes, and

dramatic, mood. As curtain-raiser or isolated piece it is equally felicitous; why is it not better known in our American symphony concerts? The other pieces, some of which are well-known and some unfamiliar, are likewise fresh, unspoiled music, gay or tender, but always the melodic outpourings of a simple and poetic soul. This music should find a place in educational work—organized or personal.

Beyond the lack of sufficiently exact pianissimos, this set has practically no discernible fault; and its virtues are many and attractive. I can imagine no one who would not derive keen pleasure from it.

Operatic

Note: Brunswick Album Sets 13 and 14, **Gilbert and Sullivan** excerpts by the **Brunswick Light Opera Company** arrived too late for review in this issue. The reviews will appear next month, but it can be stated now that these works are highly commendable.

Victor Masterpiece Series M-41 (5 D12s, Alb., \$7.50) **Wagner; Tristan und Isolde—Act III.**

<i>Isolde</i>	<i>Gota Ljungberg</i>
<i>Tristan</i>	<i>Walter Widdop</i>
<i>Kurvenal</i>	<i>Howard Fry, Eduard Habich</i>
<i>King Mark</i>	<i>Ivar Andresen</i>
<i>Brangaena</i>	<i>Genia Gusalewicz</i>
<i>Melot</i>	<i>E. Noe</i>
<i>Shepherd</i>	<i>Kennedy McKenna</i>

The **London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Albert Coates** (parts 1 to 7 inclusive); the **Berlin State Opera House Orchestra**, conducted by **Dr. Leo Blech** (parts 8 and 9); **Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by **Lawrence Collingwood** (part 10).

This work in the British album set was modestly described as *Tristan und Isolde, Act III—Selected Passages*. The Victor supplement refers to these disks as presenting some of the "supreme moments of the most impassioned of love operas." Both references, even the second, are a little depreciatory, for while the entire act is not completely recorded, the two excisions are planned to leave the main thread of the act unbroken as far as possible. Part I is the orchestral prelude, ending just where the English horn solo begins. This is omitted and part 2 follows at the end of the solo, before the shepherd appears. Part 3 continues the action without interruption, but between the end of part 3 and the beginning of part 4, the long scene between *Tristan* and *Kurvenal*, running to some thirty-one pages in the vocal score, is omitted. Part 4 begins on page 259 of the Schirmer vocal score (third stave, at the sehr mässig) and from this point to the end of the opera the music is uncut.

I miss the melancholy English horn solo, an integral part of the prelude, more than the long *Tristan-Kurvenal* dialogue. The Shepherd pipes for a moment in part 2, but the loss of his long, unaccompanied solo is a serious one.

The recording is first rate, and the orchestral performance flexible, spirited, and convincing throughout. Coates whips the excitement to almost unbearable limits in those frantic pages wherein the lovers are reunited, only for the final separation. Dr. Blech is no less dramatic in his reading of the passages from King Mark's arrival, until just before Isolde begins her final song. This, the Liebestod, is ably conducted by Lawrence Collingwood with an unspecified orchestra; to get it in on a single record side, he has to press the pace consistently, but the effect is not distasteful.

Andresen as King Mark steals the honors from the rest of the cast, despite the fact that his part is a brief one. As in the *Walküre* set, Miss Ljungberg's performance is distinguished more by the intensity of her dramatic projection of her role, than by her actual singing. Her voice has a tendency to quaver on sustained notes, but the vividness with which she realizes the dramatic possibilities of her part makes one forget entirely her purely vocal weaknesses. Widdop again proves himself a competent, sincere actor-singer, but on the whole, the German members of the cast tower unmistakably over the British ones. Habich, Noe, and Gusalewicz all deserve unqualified praise.

A good Wagnerian album, quite up to the standard set by *Die Walküre*. Probably it will be followed in time by recorded versions of the first and second acts. They will be welcome. R.D.D.

Choral

Victor: Masterpiece Set No. 29 (12 D12s, \$18.00) **Beethoven:** *Missa Solemnis*. Sung by **Orfeo Catala de Barcelona**, directed by **Maestro Lluis Millet**. Orchestral and organ accompaniment. Recorded in Barcelona, Spain.

Polydor: Nos 95146-56 **Beethoven:** *Missa Solemnis* **Bruno Kittel Choir and Philharmonic Orchestra**, Berlin. Soloists: **Lotte Leonard, Eleanor Schlosshauer-Reynolds, Eugen Transky, Wilhelm Guttmann and Herman Schey.**

Beethoven's persistent struggle with musical form culminated with the great "Choral" Symphony and the Mass in D or the "Missa Solemnis;" both, excursions along strange and untraveled paths, and both unique, baffling works of unearthly beauty and power. Of the Mass, Dr. Eaglefield Hull has this to say, "The world he reveals to us is one of tremendous events and visions; but a single principle dominates the whole—the 'heroic' struggle for absolute freedom of personality. Despair over the world's travail did not break him; he loved life for the very struggles it brought; for through pain he found a new joy; his Mass remains the perfect expression of his own faith."

The unprepared listener may wonder, recalling formal church music, at this conception of a Mass; but should remember that the afflicted Beethoven, estranged as he was, to the world, sought his creator in music that far transcended mere form and ritual.

To embark on such an undertaking as recording this work in its entirety meant sailing uncharted seas, yet both Victor and Polydor have accomplished the difficult feat in a most creditable manner. When two versions are available at the same time for review, an opinion is usually expected as to which work is the better. In this instance we must establish a precedence by avoiding the issue. Both sets have their moments when the effect achieved is truly overwhelming; both show a decided improvement in the recording of a full strength orchestra and chorus; both have their limitations; and both are different in interpretation, recording and performance. To argue which is the better, however, would be like an argument between a Philadelphian and a Bostonian, as to whose Symphony Orchestra is the better. And no doubt as decisive. It is indeed regrettable that our readers can not drop in at their neighbor dealer's and have an opportunity to hear both recordings, before making a final decision.

The Victor set is on twelve disks, the Polydor on ten and a half, the remaining half, for good measure, being devoted to Beethoven's "Worship of God in Nature," sung beautifully by the Basilica Choir. Followed with the score both represent nearly complete recordings. Victor uses more records than Polydor possibly because on the average, there is more on each Polydor record and the Victor version was taken at a somewhat slower pace.

The Victor labels do not divulge the names of the soloists. They sing musically and smoothly their voices having that characteristic Latin "mellowness." The choir is alert, sensitive and gives the impression of being well schooled. The performance is dignified, at times very impressive, at times of haunting beauty. The interpretation is not exactly traditional, like that of the German version. It is more mystical, more church-like and one misses the masculinity of Beethoven. For this reason probably, the slow movements, especially the "Sanctus" and "Agnus" the most interesting; while the "Credo" with its complex structure, its abrupt changes and contrasts requiring virile, firmer grasp, is the least effective. The recording is remarkably clear. The fortissimo passages, and Beethoven has many of them, do not burst out and degenerate into noise.

The Victor *Missa Solemnis* is a notable addition to the library of recorded masterpieces.

The Polydor version is undoubtedly more vigorous. It is broadly conceived more like the "heroic" Beethoven, whose music runs the gamut of emotions. The choir is excellent with a fine bass for foundation. It gives forth an admirable body of tone to which the brilliancy of the recording does full justice. The orchestra, too, is good and under Herr Kitte's direction provides accompaniments that are well up to standard. Of the soloists, considering the exacting demands made upon them, it can be said they perform most creditably. The male voices are consistently good. The soprano, however, sings somewhat unevenly, strains her voice on occasion when her tones are not the

most ravishing. This recording is a most interesting one of great emotional depths. Both Victor and Polydor are to be congratulated and thanked by discriminating enthusiasts of recorded music.

A. A. B.

Brunswick 20082 (D12, \$1.00) **Handel:** *Hallelujah Chorus* (from *The Messiah*), and **Buck:** *Festival Te Deum in E flat*, sung by the **Dudley Buck Singers**, with orchestral accompaniment.

The chorus is not large nor does it possess particularly engaging voices, but it sings with an abundance of spirit and animation. More famous and better equipped choirs might well profit by the example of this group's enthusiasm. The recording is good and the accompaniments competent. Buck's own *Te Deum* is probably the first major example of his work to be recorded, although many of his hymns and "sacred songs" appear frequently in record catalogues.

Vocal

Brunswick 15190 (D10, 75c) **Faust—Flower Song**, and **Si le bonheur a sourire t'invite**, sung by **Karin Branzell**, with orchestral accompaniment.

Miss Branzell's voice is exposed here in its invariable purity and lucidity of tone. It falls very gratefully on one's ears even through her performances of these particular *Faust* excerpts are decidedly lacking in animation or much conviction.

Brunswick 15193 (D10, 75c) **Friml: Indian Love Call**, and **Herbert: Kiss Me Again**, sung by **Florence Easton**, with orchestral accompaniment.

The accompaniments and recording of these two perennial favorites are extremely good. Miss Easton's performances would have been the better if less intense. She strives with somewhat too obvious effort for her effects.

Brunswick 15154 (D10, 75c) **Massenet: Serenade to Zanetto**, and **Ouvre tes yeux bleus**, sung by **Sigrid Onegin**, with orchestral accompaniment.

Here, for contrast, both accompaniment and recording are none too impressive, but Onegin's glorious voice, even in these trifles by Massenet, was never more luxurious in color and fullness. It is easy not to question the vehicles and settings when one is given such an incomparable voice on a disk. Withal, the record may have considerable educational value, for those who are attracted by the facile sentimentality of the songs themselves, will gain a new revelation of vocal tone color from the singing.

Brunswick 15192 (D10, 75c) **Tosca—Recondita Armonia**, and **La Gioconda—Cielo e Mar**, sung by **Mario Chamlee**, with orchestral accompaniment.

Chamlee approaches these familiar arias none too enthusiastically, but his performance, the recording, and the accompaniments are all competent.

Brunswick 3847 (D10, 75c) **Mendelssohn: Elijah—If With All Your Hearts**, and **Then Shall the Righteous Shine Forth**, sung by **Dan Beddoe**, with piano accompaniment by **Thomas Prewitt Williams**.

Beddoe is a noted oratorio singer; the Brunswick Company does well to represent him with characteristic performances. He sings these *Elijah* excerpts a trifle affectedly, but the disk as a whole is creditable. The piano accompaniments are a rather inadequate substitute for the original orchestral ones.

Brunswick 15191 (D10, 75c) **Nevin: The Rosary**, and **Bohm: Calm as the Night**, sung by **Marie Morrisey**, with orchestral accompaniment (and male trio in *The Rosary*.)

Even the familiarity of the selections, and the usually unpromising introduction of an "assisting male trio," fails to cast a shade on Miss Morrisey's frank, unpretentious performances, and her most pleasurable voice. A good record. Sometime may we not hear her in songs of greater artistic substance? This and her previous disks give good promise for her success with them.

Columbia 1606-D (D10, 75c) **Negro Spirituals—Run Mary Run, and Go Down Moses**, sung by **Edna Thomas**, with piano accompaniment.

Go Down Moses to sung in an arrangement that is not particularly effective, but the Run Mary Run is wholly delightful, and it is sung with all the infectious buoyancy that made Miss Thomas' Gwine to Lay Down Mah Life for Mah Lawd so welcome an addition to recorded spirituals. Miss Thomas has currently released a record of Mamzelle Zizi, sung in Creole patois. May we not have this and

some of her other noted Creole performances available in this country?

Columbia 170-M (D10, 75c) **Jacobs-Bond: I Love You Truly, and Just A-Wearyin' for you**, sung by **Sophie Braslau**, with piano accompaniment.

Miss Braslau puts a multitude of painful effort into her performances of Carrie Jacobs-Bond's successes, but the result is neither effective nor particularly pleasant. It seems odd that this singer, usually so admirable in the concert hall, should do so poorly by herself on records. The fault must lie with her, for the recording itself is clear and vigorous.

Columbia 50099-D (D12, \$1.00) **Aida—Ritorna vincitor**; **Columbia** 50100-D (D12, \$1.00) **Tosca—Vissi d'arte**, and **La Gioconda—Suicidio**; **Columbia** 50109-D (D12, \$1.00) **Cavalleria Rusticana—Voi Lo Sapete**, and **Aida—O Patria Mia**;

Sung by **Eva Turner**, with orchestral accompaniments conducted by **Sir Thomas Beecham** (except in **O Patria Mia**, where the orchestra is conducted by **Stanford Robins**.)

These are the first American releases of a young British soprano who has lately achieved something of a sensation in her appearance in the Covent Garden opera house. Her success is based on sound musical foundations, judging from these disks, which are of a superior order throughout. A trifle colorless in its lower register, her voice is capable in its upper reaches of producing a magnificent tonal line, flexible without uncertainty, intense without tightness. Her singing rather than her dramatic force is obviously the feature of her performances, but such superb vocalization is quite sufficient unto itself. These records possess the added attraction of realistic recording of great vigor and amplitude, made in Central Hall, Westminster. The accompaniments, with one exception made under Sir Thomas Beecham's direction, are spirited and brilliant without stealing one's attention from the soloist. It is hard to choose among the disks, but perhaps first mention goes to the two-part Aida aria. Miss Turner has also recorded several Turandot selections, to Beecham's accompaniments; perhaps these too will soon be issued here. No collector of vocal records should fail to acquire at least one example of Miss Turner's striking performances.

Columbia 50108-D (D12, \$1.00) **La Boheme—Che Gelida Manina**, and **Carmen—Flower Song**, sung by **Louis Graveure**, with orchestral accompaniments.

Graveure, the world has been duly informed, has now deserted the baritone ranks for those of the tenors. As the first recorded example of his new status this disk naturally possesses considerable interest. Its musical value is slight, however, as Graveure still sings with a baritone's robustness, incongruous in these selections, and his vocal line is neither uniform in quality nor tonally pleasing. Undoubtedly in future releases he will have acquired more uniform control and a more gratifying tonal color.

Odeon (German list) 85193 (D12, \$1.00) **Arditi: Kuss Walzer**, and **Schleiffarth: Zigeunerleben**, sung by **Elsbeth Nolte**, with orchestral accompaniment.

A pleasant find from the Odeon German list. Miss Nolte sings these dance songs with piquancy and spirit. Her voice is light in quality, but she handles it with ease and surety. For all its slightness of substance, this is a record to mention with praise.

Odeon 85194 (D12, \$1.00) **Meyer-Helmund: Ballgeflüster**, and **Kapeller: Ich hab' amal Raeuscherl G'habt**, sung by **Richard Tauber**, with orchestral accompaniment.

Tauber has an inimitable way with songs of this type. As in his previous release, his manly, unaffected singing makes one forget that his songs are not masterpieces. Rather, he makes one realize that in his hands they are masterpieces of their genre. Those who like Strauss waltzes and Viennese light music, and mild sentiment without sentimentality, should not miss this and other Tauber releases. We have no one at all in this country who can do precisely the same thing that Tauber does; his records should enjoy lively popularity here. There is ample room for this type of work in every record library, for while Tauber singing Schubert must stand comparison with other and often-times better equipped artists, Tauber singing pieces of the type chosen here is quite unique. Perhaps there are other European singers who can match him in his own field, but if so, we have not had the pleasure of hearing them on any disks issued in this country.

Victor 6875 (D12, \$2.00) **La Forza del Destino—Pace, Pace Mio Dio**, and **Ernani—Ernani Involami**, sung by **Rosa Ponselle**, with orchestral accompaniment.

This is more truly the Rosa Ponselle we know on the operatic stage than the one represented recently in some of the Victor ensemble records. Her singing here is fully characteristic, exhibiting both the musical merits and weaknesses for which her performances are known. Her admirers will find much to their taste here. The recording and accompaniments are good.

Victor 1355 (D10, \$1.50) **Home Sweet Home**, and **The Last Rose of Summer**, sung by **Amelita Galli-Curci**, with piano accompaniment by **Homer Samuels**.

This is a re-recording of Victor 6123, and calls for no particular comment, except that the recording is irreproachable. Many prefer quasi-folksongs of this type to be sung by lyric rather than coloratura sopranos, but that is a matter of personal taste. Galli-Curci, at least cannot be accused of ever-weighing the songs, or over-sentimentalizing them, either.

Victor 6876 (D12, \$2.00) **La Traviata—Dei miei bollenti spiriti**, and **Lucia—Tombe degl' avi miei**, sung by **Beniamino Gigli**, accompanied by the **Metropolitan Opera House Orchestra**.

The Victor supplement annotator has good reason to gloat over this release, for it is a first rate vocal performance on Gigli's part, and a superb orchestral one on the part of the Metropolitan orchestra. Add pure, vigorous recording and one has a disk which is notable even among the previous works in the excellent Victor Metropolitan series. This ranks easily as one of Gigli's best recorded representations.

Victor 8105 (D12, \$2.50) **Il Trovatore—Ai nostri monti, and Mal reggendo all' aspro assalto**, sung by **Louise Homer and Giovanni Martinelli**, with orchestral accompaniment.

The first side is successor to the acoustical version of **Home to Our Mountains** sung for Victor by Schumann-Heink and Caruso. The new version is not likely to supplant the old, however. The singing of both Mme. Homer and Mr. Martinelli is marred by over intensity and occasional moments of abruptness and forced tone. The accompaniments and recording are energetic, but not as lucid as those of most Victor ensemble records.

French Columbia D-15041 (D12) **Duparc: L'Invitation au Voyage**, and **Poulenc: Le Bestiaire**, sung by **Mme. Croiza**, with piano accompaniments played by **Francis Poulenc**. (Imported through **The H. Royer Smith Company**, Philadelphia.)

Duparc's superb song is sung here in creditable fashion. The recording and accompaniments are crystal-clear; in fact, one would prefer a setting that was somewhat less ruthlessly exposed. Poulenc's menagerie skit is to words of Guillaume Apollinaire, and deals with **Le dromadaire**, **La chevere du Tibet**, **Le sauterelle**, **Le dauphin**, **L'écrevisse**, and **La carpe**. The composer does well with the accompaniments, and Mme. Croiza exceedingly well with the vocal part. A disk of more than average interest.

Chamber Music

Columbia Masterworks Set. 100 (4 D12s, Alb., \$6.00) **Debussy: Quartet in G minor**, Op. 10, (seven parts), and **Haydn: Menuetto from the Quartet in D**, Op. 64, (one part), played by the **Lener String Quartet** (Lener, Similovits, Roth, and Hartman.)

I. **Aime et tres decide** (parts 1 and 2.)

II. **Assez vif et bien rythme** (part 3.)

III. **Andantino doucement expressif** (parts 4 and 5.)

IV. **Finale—Tres modere** (parts 6 and 7.)

Haydn: Menuetto (part 8.)

This is the first complete recording of the Debussy quartet to appear in this country, but a very fine abbreviated version by the New York String Quartet has been available for some time from Brunswick. There is a British set by the Virtuoso Quartet for H. M. V., but abroad the Lener version is hailed as the superior. I have not heard the H. M. V. disks, but these from Columbia are above reproach in every respect, except possibly that of the indefinable something known as atmosphere. The performance is vivid, scornful of the work's difficulties, and admirably recorded. The Leners' conception of the work

is obviously well-thought out, but despite their care with it, wonder if they really feel in complete sympathy with the music? Perhaps my own lack of sympathy for the work is at fault, but at any rate, I miss the gusto and singleness of effect such as can be heard unmistakably in the International Four's performance of the Ravel quartet, for example, or for that matter in the Lener's own Beethoven quartets. The slow movement, the best of the four, is beautifully played, however. One can hardly deny that it shows imaginative insight as well as technical skill and tonal loveliness of the first order. Undoubtedly admirers of the work will find these records an unmarred delight; they are surely the best that are likely to be available for sometime to come. (There is helpful analysis of the Debussy Quartet in F. H. Shea's booklet, **Dubussy and Ravel**, in "The Musical Pilgrim" series.)

O.C.O.

Instrumental

PIANO

Columbia 50107-D (D12, \$1.00) **Gershwin: Three Preludes** and the **Adante** from the **Rhapsody in Blue**, played by **George Gershwin**.

It seems exceedingly odd that this should be an "imported recording," i. e., actually recorded abroad, although pressed and manufactured in this country. But the Columbia Company is to be congratulated on taking advantage of Gershwin's European trip to record him there; perhaps his musical comedy work allowed no time for it in New York. At any rate, he can be heard here in three of his preludes (the published ones), with the slow section of the Rhapsody thrown in for good measure. The recording of the piano tone is very fine, and Gershwin's playing as crisp and pointed as always. The pieces abound in stimulating rhythmic intricacies and pianistic felicities. And more than that, they have individual and authentic musical feeling. They are not written in the jazz idiom, but they display a number of characteristics obviously derived from jazz. While they are built on a small scale, they are built with most commendable neatness and effectiveness, and they are of very considerable significance as an indication of Gershwin's progress in throwing off the Lisztian shackles which hamper him in the Rhapsody and Concerto. Here the idiom no less than the substance is authentically individual.

Victor 1353 (D10, \$1.50) **Scarlatti: Capriccio**, and **Debussy: Serenade a la Poupee** (from **The Children's Corner**), played by **Vladimir Horowitz**.

One's fear that Horowitz was to be represented by a single release is relieved by the issue of a second disk from his hand, but the surprise engendered by the choice of selections on the first record is if anything increased by the new choices. Of course they are welcome, particularly the eternally delightful Capriccio (long familiar in Josef Hoffman's Brunswick version), and it goes without saying that Horowitz plays them in superior fashion. But why should he not be represented by some of the more ambitious vehicles which have won his concert hall triumphs? On a second hearing of the disk one is inclined to press this question less forcefully. He does what he does do so perfectly, performances that the model of vivacity, delicacy, good taste, and pianistic effectiveness, the gratitude for two most admirable little works outweighs one's first regret that he did not exert such talents on larger works. This is a first class record, and one not to be passed over by any collector of the best piano disks.

Columbia 168-M (D10, 75c) **Scarlatti: Two Little Sonatas**, **Beethoven: Bagatelle**, and **Brahms: Intermezzo**, played by **Myra Hess**.

An unmatched collection of four glorious piano miniatures, and Myra Hess, all on a ten-inch disk sold for seventy-five cents! Comment is indeed superfluous, but one I should be completely unappreciative if I did not blow at least a brief trumpet blast celebrating the many merits of this marvellous little record. It will be a god-send to those for whom the pocketbook is the first consideration in obtaining records, but its virtues are far more than that of economy alone. Myra Hess was never more characteristically her gracious self than here, and the four varied pieces reveal a dozen different facets—all equally admirable—of her art.

Columbia is doing exceedingly well by piano record collectors in giving such effective representation of Hess; words of sufficient praise are difficult to find for either artist or manufacturer.

Brunswick 4098 (D10, 75c) **Kreisler: Liebesfreud**, and **Sauer: Music Box**, played by **Ignace Hilsberg**.

Hilsberg, a sincere and sensitive musician, is a welcome addition to the ranks of recording pianists. The pieces he offers for his phonographic debut are slight enough in substance, but they are played with crispness and assurance. Good, unpretentious performances, clean-cut, spirited, and to the point. The Liebesfreud indicates that Hilsberg might give us some very fine waltzes, or better still, some of the many unrecorded Chopin mazurkas. His future releases are to be anticipated.

A special group of **Polydor** piano records has been imported through the **H. Royer Smith Company** of Philadelphia. I found 90025 (D10) the most interesting; it couples a singular Elegie of Busoni's, Die Nächtlchen, and a solo version of the Russian Dance from Strawinski's Petrouchka, the latter somewhat marred by an over-abundant use of the damper pedal. **Claudio Arrau**, who plays on this disk, is also heard on 95113 (D12) in a two-part version of Balakirew's monumental work, Islamey. Arrau's performance is of the desired superb brilliance and nonchalant virtuosity; the disk is of particular interest in connection with the current Victor release of an orchestral version. On 95107 (D12), **Wilhelm Kempff** plays the Prelude and Fugue in C sharp and the Prelude and Fugue in D from the first book of Bach's Forty-Eight. The readings are curiously abrupt, almost wilful; neither is very convincing. **Franz Josef Hirt's** contribution, Honegger's Le Cahier Romand, Nos. 1 to 5 (90026, D10), is unfamiliar to me, but his performance of the five brief sketches seem quite adequate; the pieces themselves are mildly interesting. In all of the disks the recording of the piano tone is excellent. Polydor is to be congratulated on its ability in piano recording, and its stimulatingly original choice of selections. Also from the **H. Royer Smith Company** (and from **The Gramophone Shop** as well) came **French Columbia** D-15005, an odd combination of Strauss' Les Hirondelles Valse, played on two pianos by **Mm. Wiener and Clement**, and Erik Satie's valse lente, Je te veux, played by Wiener, solo. The Satie work is a mellifluous piece, reminiscent of some haunting music hall tune. It makes pleasant enough listening, although one is faintly reminded of music for a tender scene in the movies.

VIOLONCELLO

Columbia 50110-D (D12, \$1.00) **An Old Melody** (arr. **Squire**), and **Rachmaninoff-Squire: Melodie in E**, played by **W. H. Squire**, with piano accompaniment.

The Old Melody proves to be Believe Me If All These Endearing Young Charms; Squire's arrangement and performance are innocuous. The Rachmaninoff piece lends itself agreeably to transcription, and Squire plays it with the appropriate elegiac sentiment. A pleasant enough record, but not to be compared with the recent Columbia 'cello releases by Felix Salmond.

VIOLIN

Brunswick 4097 (D10, 75c) **Cui: Orientale**, and **Drigo-Auer: Valse Bluette**, played by **Frederic Fradkin**, with orchestral accompaniment in the former piece, and piano accompaniment by **Dan Lieberfeld** in the latter.

A surprisingly fine little disk. The Orientale is done in first rate fashion by both soloist and orchestra. The Valse Bluette is also neatly done, but is hardly as interesting. Easily Fradkin's best release for many months.

Light Orchestral

Odeon 3231 (D12, \$1.00) **Oscar Strauss: Waltz Dream—Selections**, played by **Edith Lorand** and her orchestra.

Good Viennese waltz playing, up to Miss Lorand's usual standard, but hardly rising above it.

Odeon 3236 (D12, \$1.00) **Gems from Favorite Operettas of Johann Strauss, von Suppe, and Milloeccker**, played by **Edith Lorand** and her orchestra.

This pleasant potpourri, however, is decidedly above even Miss Lorand's usual high standard.

Odeon 3237 (D12, \$1.00) **Silver Threads Among the Gold**, played by **Edith Lorand** and her orchestra, and **Was It a Dream?** played by **Dorsey Brothers** and their orchestra.

An odd coupling of American and European sentimental performances. Dorsey Brothers and their enlarged jazz orchestra are very bland indeed and *Was It a Dream?* for all the unrestrained luxuriance of its sentimentality, has a slight edge on Lorand's performance of the older song. Dorsey Brothers also play their piece in a very popular two-part, ten-inch Okeh version.

Odeon 3504 (D10, 75c) **A Midsummer Night waltz**, and **Oh, Charles!** fox-trot, played by **Dajos Bela** and his orchestra.

A typical example of the European equivalent of our jazz. Brilliantly played, but not particularly interesting.

Odeon 3235 (D12, \$1.00) **Strauss: Artist's Life and Southern Roses** waltzes, played by **Dajos Bela** and his orchestra.

Good straightforward waltz performances for those who do not wish the more elaborate versions by larger orchestras.

Victor (International list) V-50000 (D12, \$1.25) **From the Rhine to the Danube—Medley**, played by **Gerhard Hoffman's Orchestra**.

A conventional German medley record, well played and recorded, but not of notable interest.

Victor (German list) V-56000 (D12, \$1.25) **So singt man am Rhein—Grosser Rheinliederpotpourri**, played by **Marek Weber** and his orchestra.

A characteristic potpourri of Rhine songs, in which the lusty efforts of the orchestra are eked by a typical German male chorus.

Columbia 50103-D (D12, \$1.00) **I Can't Give You Anything But Love** and **Sweet Sue—Just You**, played by **Paul Whiteman** and his orchestra.

A quasi concert jazz disk that ranks among Whiteman's best. The version of Sweet Sue is especially felicitous. The recording is excellent.

Victor 35951 (D12, \$1.25) **Rachmaninoff: Prelude in C sharp minor, and Prelude in G minor**, played by **Rosario Bourdon** and the **Victor Concert Orchestra**.

The C sharp minor prelude simply cannot be lived down. One would think that the vocal version by the Russian Symphonic Choir was the last word on the subject, but no! a concert orchestra, with an organ in the front rank, must try its hand. The result is not very satisfactory, despite Mr. Bourdon's striving. If the work must be played by an orchestra, the version by Sir Henry Wood is much preferable. However, as this disk is obviously intended for the average dance-disk fan, one should hardly demand that it be more symphonic.

Victor 35952 (D12, \$1.25) **Grofe: Three Shades of Blue—Indigo, Alice Blue, and Heliotrope**, played by **Paul Whiteman** and his **Concert Orchestra**.

One by one the major concert jazz works are being added to the recorded repertory. This follows on the heels of Grofé's Metropolis disks, which I understand are enjoying a large sale, particularly to musicians fascinated by the novel instrumental effects obtained in them. The Three Shades of Blue suite has been popular in concert, appearing on programs by other orchestras than that of Whiteman's alone. It is more successful than the Metropolis, if somewhat less interesting, because it is less ambitious. Grofé chooses a simpler medium, and seems vastly more at his ease. This record makes pleasant listening, for the tunes are catchy enough, the instrumentation piquant, and the performance and recording brilliant. Again it is Grofé's ignorance of the principals of musical form that keeps his work from rising about the levels of a divertissement. The employment of the "nola" style for the Alice Blue piece is noteworthy. The record is by all means worth hearing, if only for its many rhythmic and instrumental intricacies.

Band

Brunswick 4005 (D10, 75c) **Sousa: High School Cadets, and Washington Post** marches, played by the **U. S. Military Academy Band**.

Another disk of vigorous band playing, brilliantly recorded, from the West Point band. In these standard marches it seems less effective than in the works chosen for its previous releases.

R.O.B.

Popular Vocal and Instrumental

Okeh has the most stimulating list for the month, topped off with Duke **Ellington's** solo piano version of two of his best works, *Black Beauty* and *Swampy River* (**Okeh** 8636.) Although his true genius is demonstrated most convincingly in his orchestral arrangement, this disk is of unusual interest, especially to those already familiar with this incomparable figure in the world of jazz. Ed **Lang**, guitarist supreme, is heard in solo versions of *Add a Little Wiggle* and *Jeannine* (41134); the recording is good, but the performances are hardly up to some of his previous releases, despite the intricate accompaniment effects in the otherwise ultra-smooth *Jeannine*. 41147 is evidently being boomed as a headliner, but its coupling of *Humoresque* and *Souvenir*, the deathless violin twins, played by Dr. Eugene **Ormand**, with harp accompaniment. **Blind Willie Dunn** is vastly more interest-holding in his guitar pieces, *There'll Be Some Changes Made* and *Church Street Sobbin' Blues* (8633), particularly remarkable for the extraordinarily vivid recording and the ingenious introductions. **Beard and Bernard** are a long way behind the Two Black Crows, but there are several amusing moments in their *Black Opinions* and *Fowl Talk* on 41140.

Brunswick has two fine Wendall **Hall** releases which cause one hastily to advance the "Red-Headed Music Maker" in one's estimation. On 3983 he has a fine version of *Oh Lucindy* coupled with a vigorously accented song, *Hot Feet*, of his own; on 4004, *Easy Goin'* has a good swing, and *My Dream Sweetheart* is sung without over emphasis on the sentimentality. Belle **Baker** sings *My Man and That's How I Feel About You* in a broad Jolsonish manner that should ensure her popularity with the vast public apparently existing for this type of singing (4086.) Henry **Burr** is represented by three special Christmas releases, 4093-5, *The Night Before Christmas*, *The Three Bears*, *Wagsey*, *Watermelon*, etc., in which he talks in an ingratiating announcer manner as well as sings. Children may like them. Glen **Wick** sings on 4103 (*My Heart Belongs to You* and *I Loved You Then*) and 4111 (*Forever and Roses of Yesterday*), very sentimental and oily performances. Marc **Williams** relates sympathetically the life and exploits of *Jesse James* and *Little Joe the Wrangler* (269); Lew **White** organizes *Jeannine* and *Roses of Yesterday* (4102); the **Dixieland Four** revives the old quartet favorites *Put On Your Old Gray Bonnet* and *Down by the Old Mill Stream* (4114); Chester **Gaylord** sings blandly *Here's That Party Now in Person* and *You're in Love* (4072); **Fradkin** and his **Fiddlers** play rather dull versions of *A Little Love A Little Kiss* and *Jalousie* (4071); and there is the usual southern miscellany.

Victor's list is not rich in novelties, but 35945, a twelve-inch disk by the **Victor Salon Group** in the hits of the hour, *Sonny Boy* and *Jeannine*, is undoubtedly slated for popularity. It is on the **Victor** "When Day is Done" pattern. There are some good vocal disks by the **California Humming Birds** in *Ten Little Miles* and *It Goes Like This* (21766); the **Revelers** in *Dusky Stevedore* and *Blue Shadows* (21765); and the **Melody Three** in *Pals* and *Remember Me to Mary* (21754.) Gene **Austin** (21779), Jimmie **Rodgers** (21574), Johnny **Marvin** (21780), and Franklyn **Baur** (21787) provide their usual solo versions of current hits; **Austin's** *Sonny Boy* will probably sell the best, but **Baur's** *Cross Roads* and *Marie*, sung in sweet, smooth style, are perhaps more interesting.

Columbia leads off with a nice disk of unsentimentalized singing that stands out pleasantly among the all-too-common saccharine opera: Don **Robert's** *High Up on a Hilltop* and *The Whole World Knows I Love You* (1602-D.) **Ukulele Ike** is somewhat more sugary in *Anita* and *Just a Night for Meditation* (1609-D), but he is still a few jumps ahead of the average songster. The **Smith** sisters are well represented in the blues list; Clara with sad versions of *Ain't Got Nobody to Grind My Coffee* and *Wanna Go Home* (14368-D), and Bessie with very interesting, but still sad, versions of *Washwoman's Blues* and *Please Help Me Get Him Off My Mind* (14315.) Lewis **James** warbles *Drink to Me Only With Thy Eyes* (1593-D); Vaughn **de Leath** has

a two-part Children's Party (1624-D) solo, and Pat's Night Out and Ho-Ho-Hogan (1594-D) with Frank **Harris**; Mauric **Gunsky** (1577-D), Ruth **Etting** (1595-D), William **McEwan** (1607-D), Oscar **Grogan** (1608-D), James **Melton** (1614-D), the **Whispering Pyanist** (1619-D), Ed **Lowry** (1620-D), and Pete **Woolery** (1626-D) are also represented on the extensive list. Ruth **Etting's** disk is featured, but I prefer Lee **Morse's** gusty versions of Old Man Sunshine and Don't be Like That (1621-D.) There is a rather colorless instrumental record by the **Von Hallberg Trio** of Tu Sais and Someone to Admire, hits from the Grand Street Follies (1618-D), and, of course, the inevitable race and southern supplements.

NOVELTY

Victor 35953 (D12, \$1.25) **Twisting the Dials**, comedy sketch by the **Happiness Boys**.

This two part satirical delineation of a quiet evening with the radio is without doubt the funniest record since the memorable first release of the Two Black Crows. The Happiness Boys have seldom achieved more than a few moments of humor in their multitudinous previous disks, but this masterpiece of caricature is consistently funny from the first squeal of tubes and rasp of static to the signing off, "And this concludes our program for the evening—and forever." The operatic soprano, the prize fight, the jazz band, the bedtime story man (with his hair-raising lion story followed by an injunction for the kiddies to have pleasant dreams), all the familiar "raddio" artists are caught with broad sure strokes. The lowbrow will enjoy it as burlesque; the highbrow as satire. Anyway you take it, it's unqualifiedly good. Let us hope the signing off is not "forever"; the subject can bear reworking.

Dance Records

Okeh walks away with the team prize this month with a list of hot disks topped by Joe **Venuti** and his **Blue Four** in strange and intricate versions of Sensation and Blue Room (41144); the introductory vocal work and chorus of the first, and the sax and fiddle playing in the second are to say the least, startling. **Venuti** is also represented on 41133, where his **New Yorkers** play a neat transcription of his old hit, Doin' Things, and I Must Have That Man, the latter with a good wa-wa chorus. The fine Four or Five Times attributed to the Little **Chocolate Dandies** last month, is out again this month attributed to the **Little Aces**, and paired with the **Big Aces'** Cherry on 41136; fine playing by negro orchestras of the more restrained type. For contrast, there is Louis **Armstrong's** enigmatically named Knee Drops (with a shrill, strange introduction) and Skip and Gutter (featuring piano and trumpet solos.) Clarence **Williams** repeats his Columbia performance of Walk that Broad on Okeh 8629, this time with a wa-wa chorus, and coupled with Have You Ever Felt that Way?; liberal use is made of the washboard and the chorus is unusually fine (a comment that can be made of most of **Williams'** records.) **Trumbauer's** Take Your Tomorrow and Love Affairs (41145) are smoother than many of his works; the talk-back chorus in the former is amusing. For the rest, there are 41137, Billy **Hays** in colorless versions of Doing the Raccoon and I Can't Get Enough of You; 41132, Justin **Ring's** Twelve O'Clock Waltz and the **Royal Music Makers'** Anita Waltz; 41141, Ted **Wallace's** Beggars of Life and Blue Shadows; 41138, the **Goofus Five's** Sonny Boy and My Blackbirds are Bluebirds Now; and 41142, Eddie **Condon** and his **Footwarmers** in Makin' Frien's and I'm Sorry I Made Your Cry. The last-named disk really deserves classification in the first group; it contains some good hot jazz playing.

Victor, however, boasts the individual winner of the month: Duke **Ellington** (again!) in a disk which rivals even last month's The Mooche from **Okeh**. The East St. Louis Toodle-oo has been out before from **Brunswick**, but this version (**Victor** 21703) is vastly superior—a remarkable piece of deep-throated playing and sonorous recording. The coupling is Got Everything But You, a work which can compare with Black Beauty for sheer melodic beauty. For anyone unacquainted with **Ellington's** records, I can re-

commend no more effective introductory disk than this one. **Ohman and Arden** show distinct improvement over their recent releases, and in Will You Remember? and Ups-a-Daisy! sound like their old selves (21774.) **Waring's Penn-sylvanians** have smooth versions of I'm Sorry Sally and Just Another Night (21755), and Say that You Love Me and I Want the World to Know (21783); **Aaronson's Commanders** have a vigorous My Scandinavian Gal (with a good chorus and a clever introduction of a snatch of Peer Gynt) and a less interesting Oh You Sweet Old Whatcha May Call It (21778); Ted **Weems** has fair versions of You're the Cream in My Coffee and Anything Your Heart Desires (21767), and he provides I Found You Out to **McEnelly's** coupling of Take Your Tomorrow (21773); and the indefatigable **Shilkret** and the no less indefatigable **Troubadours** are represented on 21753, 21771, and 21772. For hot novelty is a sizzling coupling of Shreveport Stomp and Shoe Shiner's Drag by **Jell-Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers** (21658.)

The **Columbia** list is of good size and merit, but it contains few works of unusual interest. Paul **Ash** leads with good versions of Salty and Deep Blue (1616-D.) Jan **Garber's** Louisiana and Outside are chiefly remarkable for the extreme brilliance of the recording (1615-D.) Leo **Reisman** and **Thomas' Collegians** are both rather monotonous in their respective versions of My Window of Dreams and Billie, on 1603-D. **Selvin's** There's a Rainbow Round My Shoulder is not as good as some other dance versions; the **Columbian's** When Summer is Gone is likewise unnoteworthy (1605-D.) But **Selvin** redeems himself with a good I'm Sorry Sally and If You Want the Rainbow (1617-D.) The **Clicquot Club Eskimos** play Cross Roads and Wait till the Clouds Roll By in vigorous but rather conventional fashion; the banjo and ukulele solos are good. For slow blues disks are 14367-D and 14372-D, the **Whoopee Makers'** Sister Kate and Somebody Stole My Gal, and the **Gulf Coast Seven's** Daylight Savin' Blues and Georgia's Always on My Mind, both very blue and interesting. The **Whoopee Makers** are not **Ellington's** orchestra, although the latter took that title for one of its "Perfect" releases. For the rest, there are 1596-D, the **Knickerbockers** in Doin' the Raccoon and Happy Days; 1604-D, the **Nitelites** in You're the Cream in My Coffee and I Wanna be Loved by You; 1622-D, the **Nitelites** again, this time with Pompanola and My Silver Tree; and 1623-D, coupling the **Cavaliers** in I Loved You Then and the **Columbians** in Marion. The last is the only one of particular interest.

Ellington heads the **Brunswick** as well as the **Victor** lists. His Awful Sad and Louisiana on **Brunswick** 4110 are but a shade below his superlative Toodle-oo and Got Everything. The **Clevelanders** have a fine coupling of Dusky Stevedore and Guess Who's in Town (4109); Arnold **Johnson** does well with That's How I Feel and Memories of France (4080); the **Varsity Four** is lively but hardly striking in Kiddie Kapers and Jumping Jack (4075); the **Arrowhead Inn** Orchestra has peppy versions of Sleep Baby (no Wiegeliel, this!) and Good Little Bad Little You (4074); the **Six Jumping Jacks** are louder and wilder than ever in the Prune Song (No matter How Young a Prune May Be It's Always Full of Wrinkles) and I Never Kissed a Baby Like You (4073); Jesse **Stafford** plays I Need Sympathy and I'm Writing You this Little Melody (4070); and Ray **Miller** has a featured coupling of I'm Sorry Sally and Mia Bella Rosa (4108.) Finally there are three noteworthy **Vocalions**: 1215, Jimmy **Noone's** strange Oh Sister and Blues My Naughty Sweetie Sings to Me; 15729, the **Louisiana Rhythm Kings'** vigorous Hallucinations and Skinner's Sock; and 15728, Joe **Mannone's** shrill Fare Thee Well and Downright Disgusted.

—Rufus

Foreign Records

A large number of **Odeon** foreign records are omitted from the following lists. They will be reviewed later.

International. The **Brunswick International Concert Orchestra** is conducted by S. Oberman in the Lolita and Tartar Dance on 77011, and by E. Fuerst in a two-part Geisha potpourri by Sydney Jones on 77013. **Columbia** features

the **Russian Novelty Orchestra** in the Broken String and Swallow waltzes (38005-F), the **Serbian Tambouritz Orchestra** in Kosovo waltz and Theresa polka (38004-F), and the **Columbia Band** in rather inadequate versions of the Washington Post and El Capitan marches (12096-F). The two **Victor** leaders are a tango coupling by Marek **Weber** on V-2, and a very interesting recording of actual canary songs on V-1. The canaries are from **Reich's Aviary** Bremen, and the excellent recording of their singing will particularly appeal to those who own or raise canaries.

French-Canadian. Albert **Marier** and Ludovic **Huot** sing Ris Clown Ris and Angela Mia respectively for **Columbia** (34182-F). Angela Mia is also sung by Romeo **Mousseau** for **Victor** (V-5008.) **Victor** lists several special disks recorded in Canada by Charles **Marchand**, Georges **Beaubachemin**, Fernand **Perron**, Joseph **Allard**, etc.

German. **Okeh** has a fine Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht sung by **Staats und Domchor** under the direction of Prof. Hugo **Ruedel** coupled with Hu Fröhliche on 85192; and the same song played by the **Dajos Bela Kuenstlerkapelle**, coupled with O Tannenbaum on **Odeon** 10510. The **Odeon Military Band** plays very vigorous versions of the Max Otto and King Frederick marches on 3505. **Brunswick** features Carl **Frischer**, Plattdeutsch comedian, in sketches on 73032. **Columbia's** leaders are two instrumental disks of csardas and walzer by the **Wiener Herzen Bauern Kapelle** (55139-F, 55143-F.) For **Victor** Die sechs hungrigen **Musikanten** continue their street band performances on V-6002, Der lustige Kupferschmied and Die Holzauktion; Ferdy **Kaufmann** plays Dornröschen Brautfahrt and Schmiede in Walde on V-6000; and **Stahls Kapelle** has a two-part waltz song on V-56002. (See also light orchestral reviews.)

Hebrew-Jewish. Isa **Kremer** is unrepresented on the **Brunswick** list this month, but A. **Shryer** plays two of his own compositions on 67123, and Pinchus **Lavenda** tenor, sings hits from Der Griner Chosen and Golden Teg (67125.) For **Victor** Josef **Rosenblatt** sings a two-part version of Omar Rabbi Ishmuil on 4084 (Red Seal, \$1.00) and Moishele **Soorkis** (The Blind Cantor) sings a two-part version of Roumanische Freilachs on V-9000.)

Hungarian. **Columbia** 10177-9-F represent respectively Kiraly **Erno**, tenor, Thomee **Karoly**, soprano, and **Zsadanyi**. **Victor** V-11000-2 are all by the gipsy orchestra **Debreczeni Kiss Lajos**.

Italian. The **Dajos Bela** orchestra plays tangos on **Odeon** 9417; Gilda **Mignonette** sings Neapolitan songs on **Brunswick** 58100 and 58122; Ria **Rosa** sings Neapolitan songs on **Columbia** 14419-F and 14421-F; and the **Banda Rossi** plays a mazurka and polka on **Victor** V-62000.

Irish. **Columbia** issues an extensive list, headed by the **Flanagan Brothers'** reels and songs on 33300-F, Shaun O'Nolan's songs on 33301-F and 33297-F, and the **Gray Brothers'** flute duets on 33298-F.

Polish. Most interesting are **Brunswick** 60088-9, choral disks of church songs by the **Chor Z Pilzna Z Organem**; **Columbia** 18297-F, Sonny Boy sung in Polish by Marek Windheim; and **Victor** V-16004, dances by the **Wiejska Orkiestra Witkowskiego**.

Portuguese. Santos **Carvalho** recites and sings on **Columbia** 1049-X; and the **Foz Melody Band** plays selections from a Portuguese suite on **Victor** 81476.

Russian-Ukrainian. Outstanding is a two-part Storm on the Volga sung by the **Russian State Choir** on **Victor** 9209 (Red Seal, \$1.50) to be mentioned in greater detail later. **Victor** has another interesting choral disk in V-71001, sacred hymns by the **St. Mary's Greek Catholic Church Choir**. The **Russkyj Chor** "Volga" sings Stenka Razin on **Columbia** 20164-F, and the **Brunswick Ukrainska Orchestra** plays a waltz and polka on **Brunswick** 59074.

Scandinavian. **Odeon** leads with an interesting two-part Potpourri över Värmlands Melodier, played the **Odeon Konsert Orkester** with vocal solo by Sven-Olof **Sandberg**. The **Kungl. Flottans Musikkar** band of Karlskrona has two energetic marches on **Columbia** 22085-F, and the **Scandinavian Bell Ringers** have another good carillon disk for **Victor** (V-20001.)

Scotch. **Columbia** is alone here with three fine releases: the Light Cavalry overture in a two-part organ solo version played by Quentin **Maclean** (37025-F); a two-part Pipes of Three Nations by Major James **Robertson** (37026-F); and a strathspey and reel by the **Caledonian Band** (37027-D.)

Spanish-Mexican. **Okeh** has two leaders in 16335, flute

solo by Eulalio **Sanchez**, and 16590, tangos by the **Orquesta Dajos Bela Turnier**. **Brunswick**'s list is as extensive as ever; the most interesting are perhaps 40381 and 40383-4, duets by **Arvizu and Talavera**, and 40504 and 40507, dances by the **Marimba Guatimalteca** "La Chapina."

The **Banda Acosta** plays a march and waltz on **Columbia** 3323-X and the **Columbia Orchestra** and **Columbia Band** are paired on **Columbia** 3388-X. Juan **Pulido** again provides the high lights of the **Victor** list with two tangos on 81566 and two waltzes on 81788, followed by Carlos **Mejia** in Angela Mia and Madre Querida on 81787.

S. F.

Too Late for Review

Special Victor New Year's List, for Release on January 11th.

Strauss: **Rosenkavalier** (9280-3) Richard Strauss and the Augmented Trivoli Orchestra; **Till Eulenspiegel** (9271-2) Albert Coates and the London Symphony Orchestra.

De Falla: **Three Cornered Hat Suite** (21781-2) Malcolm Sargent and the New Light Symphony Orchestra. **Fabini: Campo** (9156-7) Vladimir Shavitch and Symphony Orchestra. **Honegger:** **Pacific 231** (9276) Piero Coppola and Continental Symphony Orchestra. **Dukas:** **Preludes to Acts II and III of Ariane and Blue Beard** (9277) Piero Coppola and Continental Symphony Orchestra.

Brahms: **Academic Festival Overture** (6833) Ossip Gabrilowitsch and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra; **Variations on a Theme of Haydn** (9287-9) Pablo Casals and the London Symphony Orchestra.

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Gluck-Mottl: **Ballet Suite** (9278) Leo Blech and the Berlin State Opera House Orchestra. **Wagner:** **Flying Dutchman—Overture** (9275) Leo Blech and the Berlin State Opera House Orchestra. **Schubert:** **Rosamunde—Overture** (9274) Malcolm Sargent and the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra. **Berlioz:** **Roman Carnival—Overture** (9207) Leo Blech and the Berlin State Opera House Orchestra.

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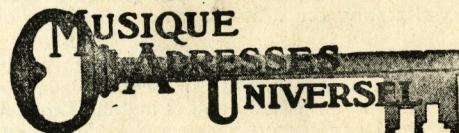
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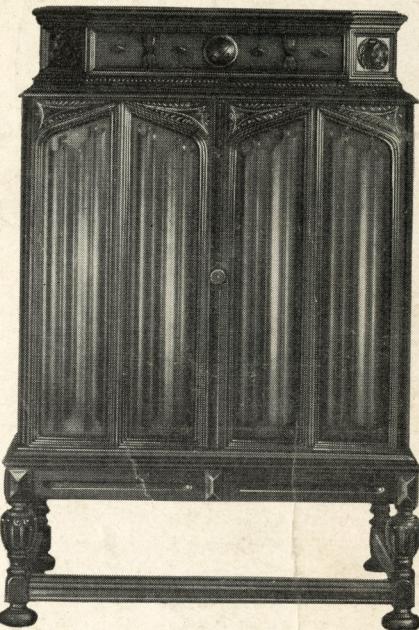
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